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About the CTC Sentinel

The Combating Terrorism Center is an independent educational and research institution based in the Department of Social Sciences at the United States Military Academy, West Point. The CTC Sentinel harnesses the Center's global network of scholars and practitioners to understand and confront contemporary threats posed by terrorism and other forms of political violence.

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The Pakistani Taliban's Karachi Network

By Zia Ur Rehman



An injured child is carried to a hospital after the TTP tried to kill a secular political candidate in Karachi on May 11. - AFP/ Getty Images

IN THE RUN-UP to Pakistan's general elections in May 2013, Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) militants displayed their might in the country's largest city of Karachi. On May 3, the TTP assassinated Sadiq Zaman Khattak, a candidate from the secular Awami National Party (ANP).¹ On May 11, election day, TTP militants tried to assassinate ANP candidate Amanullah Mehsud by detonating a powerful bomb that killed 11 people in the city's Landhi neighborhood.²

Far from their traditional home in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province (KP), TTP

militants have increasingly moved to this bustling commercial hub to escape Pakistani military operations and U.S. drone strikes. Although the TTP's movement to Karachi has been visible since at least 2009,³ the group began to escalate violent activities in June 2012, threatening to destabilize one of Pakistan's preeminent cities—home to the country's central bank and stock exchange.⁴ Today, evidence suggests

3 For the past decade, Afghan and Pakistani Taliban factions have used Karachi for fundraising purposes. After Pakistan's military operations in the Swat Valley in 2009—as well as operations in South Waziristan Agency and Mohmand Agency—TTP militants expanded operations in Karachi. The scale of their operations increased dramatically beginning in June 2012.

4 Karachi generates at least 60% of national revenue. For details, see Declan Walsh and Zia Ur Rehman, "Taliban Spread Terror in Karachi as the New Gang in Town," *New York Times*, March 28, 2013; Zia Ur Rehman, "Taliban

1 "Taliban Claim Responsibility: ANP Candidate, Son Shot Dead in Karachi," *Dawn*, May 4, 2013.

2 "Poll-Related Violence Claims 38 Lives," *Dawn*, May 12, 2013.

that entire Pashtun neighborhoods in Karachi are under the influence of TTP militants.⁵ In October 2012, a report submitted to Pakistan's Supreme Court claimed that 7,000 TTP militants have infiltrated Karachi.⁶

This article identifies the various TTP factions operating in the city, explains how the TTP uses extortion to raise funds in Karachi, shows how the group is targeting secular political parties and law enforcement, and then reveals the implications of these developments. It finds that the TTP has increased its influence in Karachi and is escalating violent activities—a trend that could negatively impact Karachi's economy and put the city's security at risk.

The TTP's Karachi Network

Since 2009, TTP militants have moved from FATA and the KP to Karachi. Security analysts attribute this migration to Pakistan's military operations in the country's northwest as well as increasingly frequent and deadly U.S. drone strikes in FATA.⁷ Karachi is attractive to the TTP because it is Pakistan's largest city—with approximately 20 million people—and is home to many different ethnic and linguistic groups, making it easier to operate clandestinely.⁸ More significantly, approximately five million Pashtuns⁹—the ethnic group to which almost all Taliban belong—live in Karachi, and tribal militants

can find sanctuaries in Pashtun neighborhoods.¹⁰ A number of other militant groups operate in the city—such as Jaysh-i-Muhammad, Lashkar-i-Jhangvi, Jammatul Furqan, Harkat-ul-Jihad-Islami, and Jundullah—some of which are sectarian in nature and generally share the TTP's more radical outlook.¹¹ In the early stages of the TTP's movement to Karachi, the group's primary purpose was for fundraising, as well as rest and recuperation.¹² Beginning in June 2012, however, the group escalated its violent fundraising tactics and increasingly attacked secular politicians and law enforcement personnel.¹³

As TTP militants moved into Karachi, they organized into three factions: the Mehsud faction, the Swat faction and the Mohmand faction. All three factions operate from Pashtun neighborhoods in Karachi.¹⁴ These areas include Ittehad Town, Mingophir, Kunwari Colony, Pashtun Abad, Pipri, Gulshen-e-Buner, Metrovele, Pathan Colony, Frontier Colony and settlements in the Sohrab Goth area.¹⁵

The most powerful TTP faction in Karachi is dominated by the Mehsud tribe of South Waziristan. The TTP Mehsud faction in Karachi is organizationally divided into two groups: one is loyal to TTP chief

Hakimullah Mehsud, and the second one reports to TTP South Waziristan chief Waliur Rehman Mehsud.¹⁶ Both leaders belong to the Mehsud tribe, and within the TTP they each have their own militias but share the same agenda.¹⁷

The leadership structure of the TTP Mehsud faction in Karachi is relatively unknown. TTP militants and Mehsud tribal elders, however, claim that Hakimullah Mehsud appointed Qari Yar Muhammad as the TTP's Karachi chief and Sher Khan as the operational commander.¹⁸ Waliur Rehman Mehsud reportedly appointed Khan Zaman Mehsud as his Karachi commander.¹⁹ Other Karachi commanders for Waliur Rehman's faction include Naimatullah Mehsud, Abid Mehsud and Ghazan Gul.²⁰ Naimatullah Mehsud, the chief for Sohrab Goth, was killed in the Lasi Goth area of Sohrab Goth during a Pakistani paramilitary operation on April 5, 2013.²¹ His successor is unknown.

Both TTP Mehsud factions are active in Mehsud tribe dominated suburban neighborhoods in Karachi.²² Before June 2012, these militants operated under the cover of political and religious parties to avoid the attention of law enforcement agencies, but now they have brazenly formed several organizations in Pashtun neighborhoods. These organizations, such as the Sohrab Goth-based Insaf Aman Committee (Committee for Justice and Peace), are increasingly arbitrating small disputes among Mehsud tribesmen over property, family feuds, and business matters according to Shari'a (Islamic law).²³ Due to the long delays of

Bringing Their War to Streets of Karachi," *Friday Times*, August 10, 2012; "Karachi Contributes 60-70pc of Revenue," *The Nation*, July 25, 2010.

5 Rehman, "Taliban Bringing Their War to Streets of Karachi."

6 "SC Orders IG Sindh, Officials to Submit Report on 7,000 Taliban Infiltrating Karachi," *Express Tribune*, October 3, 2012; Fahim Zaman and Naziha Syed Ali, "Taliban in Karachi: The Real Story," *Dawn*, March 31, 2013; "Taliban Flex Muscle in Karachi Ahead of Pakistan Vote," *Agence France-Presse*, May 11, 2013.

7 Syed Aarfeen, "Karachi Main Security Idray Baihis, Mukhbar Qatal, Intelligence Khatm Hogai," *Daily Jang* [Karachi], February 2, 2013; Ali Arqam, "The Taliban in Karachi?" *Pakistan Today*, April 4, 2013; personal interview, Chaudhry Aslam Khan, senior Karachi police official, Karachi, Pakistan, February 25, 2013.

8 Salman Masood, "New Exodus Fuels Concerns in Pakistan," *New York Times*, May 15, 2009; personal interview, Chaudhry Aslam Khan, senior Karachi police official, Karachi, Pakistan, February 25, 2013.

9 Farrukh Saleem, "Why Karachi is Bleeding," *The News International*, October 21, 2010.

10 Personal interview, Sohail Khattak, a journalist based in Karachi who has covered militancy in the city extensively, Karachi, Pakistan, April 12, 2013.

11 Amir Mir, "Karachi Taken Hostage by 25 Jihadi Groups," *The News International*, November 5, 2012.

12 Zia Ur Rehman, "Taliban Recruiting and Fundraising in Karachi," *CTC Sentinel* 5:7 (2012); personal interview, Chaudhry Aslam Khan, senior Karachi police official, Karachi, Pakistan, February 25, 2013; personal interview, TTP associate in Karachi who identified himself as "Mohsin," Karachi, Pakistan, April 8, 2013.

13 Personal interview, Shahi Syed, Sindh president of Awami National Party and a member of Pakistani Senate, Karachi, Pakistan, April 7, 2013. Syed said that before June 2012, there were only a few cases of the TTP threatening Pashtun traders and leaders at the organizational level. For more details, see Zia Ur Rehman, "Taliban Collect Funds Through Extortion, Forced Zakat, Officials Say," *Central Asia Online*, August 1, 2012; personal interview, TTP associate in Karachi who identified himself as "Mohsin," Karachi, Pakistan, April 8, 2013.

14 Zia Ur Rehman, "Karachi Police Continue Crackdown on TTP," *Central Asia Online*, December 3, 2012.

15 Personal interview, Sohail Khattak, a journalist based in Karachi who has covered militancy in the city extensively, Karachi, Pakistan, April 12, 2013; Aarfeen.

16 Personal interview, TTP associate in Karachi who identified himself as "Mohsin," Karachi, Pakistan, April 8, 2013.

17 Some media reports suggest that the two leaders are on poor terms due to prior disputes over TTP leadership succession. See "A New Pakistani Taliban Chief Emerging?" *Dawn*, December 6, 2012.

18 Personal interview, TTP associate in Karachi who identified himself as "Mohsin," Karachi, Pakistan, April 8, 2013; personal interview, former leader of the ANP from the Mehsud clan, Karachi, Pakistan, April 12, 2013.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid.

21 "Taliban Commander Killed in Sohrab Goth Raid," *The News International*, April 6, 2013; "TTP Man' Killed in Lasi Goth," *Dawn*, April 6, 2013.

22 Zaman and Ali.

23 "TTP Man' Arrested in Sohrab Goth," *Dawn*, April 11, 2013; Salis bin Perwaiz, "Commander' who Recruited 50

working within Pakistan's state judicial system, some find the TTP's arbitration methods more attractive.²⁴

Another Taliban faction in Karachi is largely comprised of militants from the Swat Valley who are loyal to TTP Swat chief Maulana Fazlullah. The commander for the Swat militants in Karachi is unknown, but anti-Taliban elders in Swat allege that the Karachi-based group is mainly led by Ibn-e-Aqeel (also known as Khog) and Sher Muhammad (also known as Yaseen).²⁵ Both of these men are wanted by the authorities in Swat. TTP commander Ibn-e-Amin established the Karachi chapter of the TTP's Swat faction three and a half years ago in the tribal areas.²⁶ A U.S. drone killed Ibn-e-Amin in the Tirah Valley of Khyber Agency in December 2010.²⁷

Beginning in 2011, Swat militants killed dozens of anti-Taliban elders and political figures from Swat who were traveling to or living in Karachi.²⁸ In June 2012, however, they began to kill local ANP leaders in Karachi as well.²⁹ Sher Shah Khan, a parliamentarian elected from Swat, alleged in 2012 that "a number of other Swati political and social figures have also been killed in the streets of Karachi by militants loyal to TTP Swat chief Maulana Fazlullah."³⁰

Youths for TTP Arrested," *The News International*, April 11, 2013.

24 Personal interview, Ali Muhammad, Pashtun transporter in Karachi, Karachi, Pakistan, April 12, 2013; "TTP Man Arrested in Sohrab Goth"; "Pakistan Taliban Setup Sharia Courts in Karachi," *The News Tribune*, January 31, 2013; Ahmed Wali Mujeeb, "How the Taliban Gripped Karachi," BBC, March 21, 2013.

25 Zia Ur Rehman, "Karachi Targeted Killings of Pashtuns Tied to Militant Groups," *Central Asia Online*, April 1, 2011.

26 Personal interview, TTP associate in Karachi who identified himself as "Mohsin," Karachi, Pakistan, April 8, 2013.

27 "Extremist Commander Killed in Khyber," *The News International*, December 20, 2010.

28 Rehman, "Karachi Targeted Killings of Pashtuns Tied to Militant Groups."

29 Personal interview, Shahi Syed, Sindh president of Awami National Party and a member of Pakistani Senate, Karachi, Pakistan, April 7, 2013; Javed Mahmood, "TTP Warns ANP Workers to Quit Party," *Central Asia Online*, July 7, 2013; Sohail Khattak, "Settling Scores: Taliban on a Killing Spree in Karachi," *Express Tribune*, August 16, 2012.

30 Rehman, "Taliban Bringing their War to Streets of

Unlike the Mehsud faction, however, the Swat faction does not offer arbitration services to settle family and business disputes in Karachi.³¹

The Mohmand chapter of the TTP has also formed its own faction in Karachi, where it primarily extorts workers who have families in Mohmand Agency.³² TTP Mohmand chief Abdul Wali (popularly known as Omar Khalid) and spokesman Ikramullah Mohmand developed the network to raise money.³³ Qari Shakeel, the deputy to Abdul Wali, calls the Karachi workers himself, threatening to kill their relatives in Mohmand if they refuse to pay protection money.³⁴ The network, led by TTP commander Haleem Syed in Karachi, has already killed several traders who refused to pay.³⁵

TTP Extortion Schemes in Karachi

Since June 2012, the TTP factions in Karachi have become more brazen and violent. Dozens of truckers in Karachi whose families live in South Waziristan, Mohmand and Khyber tribal agencies have paid tens of thousands of dollars during the last year to free their family members from TTP militants.³⁶ As part of these extortion rackets, TTP militants often threaten a Karachi-based worker, saying that their fellow militants in FATA will kidnap or kill the worker's family unless "protection" or ransom money is paid. Demands range from \$10,000 to \$50,000.³⁷ Many of these incidents go unreported due to threats from TTP militants.³⁸ In addition to these extortion rackets and kidnap-for-ransom schemes, Pashtun truckers who carry supplies from the port of Karachi on the Indian Ocean to NATO forces

Karachi."

31 Personal interview, TTP associate in Karachi who identified himself as "Mohsin," Karachi, Pakistan, April 8, 2013.

32 Ali Arqam, "The Taliban in Karachi?" *Pakistan Today*, April 4, 2013.

33 Rehman, "Taliban Bringing Their War to Streets of Karachi."

34 Ibid.

35 Personal interview, timber trader in Karachi from Mohmand Agency, Karachi, Pakistan, April 10, 2013.

36 Rehman, "Taliban Recruiting and Fundraising in Karachi."

37 The ransom amounts are reportedly negotiable, but payment is not. See Walsh and Rehman.

38 Personal interview, Pashtun transporter in Karachi, Karachi, Pakistan, April 12, 2013.

in Afghanistan have been forced to pay thousands of dollars in protection money to avoid being targeted by the TTP.³⁹

Some argue that the TTP escalated its fundraising efforts due to a shortage of money in the wake of anti-terrorism financing measures taken by Pakistani authorities, which have restricted the TTP's sources of income from abroad.⁴⁰ In response, TTP leaders in the tribal regions reportedly directed their Karachi-based operatives to collect funds through extortion, kidnap-for-

"If the group's attacks on secular society and law enforcement continue, it could threaten stability in a city that earns 60-70% of Pakistan's national revenue."

ransom, as well as bank heists.⁴¹ In the first four months of 2013, for example, 11 bank robberies netted approximately \$800,000, and authorities believe that most of the robberies were aimed at helping the TTP as well as other groups such as Lashkar-i-Jhangvi.⁴²

The TTP leadership in FATA monitors the fundraising campaign closely, and has punished operatives who embezzle funds. In early 2013, TTP chief Hakimullah Mehsud reportedly ordered his men to kill his former Karachi leader, Sher Zaman Mehsud, for stealing money that was collected through extortion and bank robberies.⁴³

39 Ibid.; Saeed Shah, "Sprawling Karachi Becomes an Islamic Extremist Melting Pot," *McClatchy Newspapers*, June 9, 2010.

40 Personal interview, Chaudhry Aslam Khan, senior Karachi police official, Karachi, Pakistan, February 25, 2013; Javed Mahmood, "Pakistani Banks to Issue Alerts About Suspicious Transactions," *Central Asia Online*, September 9, 2012.

41 Saud Khan, "Rs 76.4m Looted in 11 Bank Heists This Year," *Daily Times*, May 2, 2013; "Taliban Bank Robber Held," *The News International*, May 8, 2013.

42 Ibid.

43 "Karachi: Taliban nay Raqam ke Tanazeh par apnay commander ka sar qalam kardia, Express to video Mo-sool," *Daily Express* [Karachi], March 11, 2013.

Political Killings and Attacks on Law Enforcement

During the past year, the TTP has increased operations targeting secular political parties and law enforcement personnel. In June 2012, TTP operatives sent a message to the ANP's local leaders demanding that they quit the party, take down ANP flags and posters, and close their offices.⁴⁴ According to the ANP, the TTP has killed 70 ANP leaders in Karachi since that warning.⁴⁵ Approximately 44 ANP party offices have been closed across the city, and several party leaders have left Karachi and moved to Islamabad due to persistent TTP threats.⁴⁶ In addition to targeting the ANP, the TTP has also threatened the secular Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), a political party that largely represents the Urdu-speaking Muslim community.⁴⁷

The TTP has not, however, targeted Karachi's religious parties, such as Jamiat-i-Ulama-i-Islam-Fazlur (JUI-F). According to JUI-F candidate Mullah Karim Abid, who spoke to reporters before the May 11 polls, their campaign was not affected by the Taliban.⁴⁸ When asked about the TTP's strong-arm tactics in the city, he replied, "Taliban? What Taliban? There are no real Taliban on the ground. All these things are fabricated by authorities."⁴⁹

During the recent election campaign, TTP militants attacked rallies and offices of the ANP, MQM and the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) in various parts of Karachi, killing and injuring dozens of people.⁵⁰ The TTP placed pamphlets

at mosques and at polling stations, warning Pakistanis not to vote for the ANP, PPP and MQM candidates.⁵¹ The group assassinated an ANP candidate on May 3, and tried to assassinate an ANP candidate on election day.⁵²

TTP militants in Karachi are also targeting law enforcement. Police believe that the TTP has a "hit list" that includes police officers who have been involved in the arrests and deaths of TTP commanders and militants.⁵³ These police officials include Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Chaudhry Aslam Khan, Superintendent of Police Mazhar Mashwani, SSP Raja Omar Khitab, SSP Khurram Waris and SSP Farooq Awan.⁵⁴ Taliban militants have attacked the Sohrab Goth and Mangophr police stations several times, while dozens of law enforcement personnel have been killed in areas of Karachi under TTP influence.⁵⁵ According to former Sindh Police Chief Fayyaz Leghari, TTP militants and other banned outfits such as Lashkar-i-Jhangvi killed 27 personnel from the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of the Karachi police between November 1 and December 15, 2012.⁵⁶

Implications

The TTP's escalating violence in Karachi has major security and political implications for Pakistan. Media reports suggest that of the 20 million people living in Karachi, roughly one million live in neighborhoods where the TTP has

a presence.⁵⁷ Police suspect that Taliban militants in Karachi operate in small cells, each consisting of 10-15 militants.⁵⁸ If the group's attacks on secular society and law enforcement continue, it could threaten stability in a city that earns 60-70% of Pakistan's national revenue.⁵⁹

On the political front, the Taliban's growing strength in Karachi will weaken Pakistan's more secular political parties, especially the anti-Taliban ANP and MQM.⁶⁰ The ANP leadership claims that TTP pressure and attacks in the lead-up to election day prevented them from openly contesting the polls in Karachi, and they were forced to limit

"The ANP leadership claims that TTP pressure and attacks in the lead-up to election day prevented them from openly contesting the polls in Karachi."

outreach activities.⁶¹ Perhaps partly as a result of this intimidation, the ANP, which had won two seats out of 42 in Karachi in the 2008 elections, lost both of its provincial assembly seats.⁶² The PPP lost two national and three provincial assembly seats that it had won in previous elections as well.⁶³

Therefore, if the TTP's Karachi network grows, it could weaken the local economy, constrain Karachi's secular parties, and threaten the city's overall security.⁶⁴

44 Maqbool Ahmed and Mansoor Khan, "Troubled North-West Comes to Town," *Herald*, December 16, 2012.

45 Ibid.

46 Personal interview, Shahi Syed, Sindh president of Awami National Party and a member of Pakistani Senate, Karachi, Pakistan, April 7, 2013.

47 Urdu-speaking Muslims migrated to Pakistan when the country became independent from the British in 1947, and they largely settled in Karachi and Hyderabad in Sindh Province. The MQM has openly denounced the TTP in the past. See Zahir Shah Sherazi, "Pakistan Taliban Threaten to Target MQM," *Dawn*, November 2, 2012; "Pakistani Taliban Claim Responsibility for MQM MPA's Killing," *Dawn*, January 17, 2013.

48 "Taliban Flex Muscle in Karachi Ahead of Pakistan Vote."

49 Ibid.

50 "Taliban Attack on ANP Meeting Kills Ten in Kara-

chi," *Dawn*, April 26, 2013; Imran Kazmi, "Attacks on MQM, PPP in Karachi; Five Killed," *Dawn*, April 28, 2013.

51 "Plan B for ANP Candidates: Live the Country," *Express Tribune*, May 11, 2013.

52 Mansoor Khan, "Taliban Bullets Kill ANP Candidate, Son in Karachi," *The Nation*, May 4, 2013; Salis Bin Perwaiz, "Explosions Rock Karachi; Punjab, KP Remain Relatively Peaceful," *The News International*, May 12, 2013.

53 Zia Ur Rehman, "Karachi Police Determined to Eliminate Terror Network," *Central Asia Online*, December 12, 2012.

54 Personal interview, Chaudhry Aslam Khan, senior Karachi police official, Karachi, Pakistan, February 25, 2013; "Police Officers Were Receiving Threats from Terrorists in Karachi: Sources," *Samaa TV*, September 19, 2011.

55 Aarfeen.

56 Zia Ur Rehman, "Karachi Police Determined to Eliminate Terror Network."

57 Zaman and Ali.

58 Ibid.

59 "Karachi Contributes 60-70pc of Revenue."

60 Ali K. Chishti, "Terror Threat Looms in Karachi," *Friday Times*, April 12-18, 2013.

61 Personal interview, Younas Khan, an ANP candidate contesting elections from Karachi, Karachi, Pakistan, May 10, 2013.

62 Ibid.; Tahir Hasan Khan, "PPP and ANP Lose their Share in City," *The News International*, May 13, 2013.

63 Ibid.

64 Personal interview, Abdul Waheed, president of Bright Education Society, an NGO working in Pashtun neighborhoods of Karachi, Karachi, Pakistan, April 16, 2013.

Conclusion

Pakistani security experts, politicians, and law enforcement all agree that the TTP wants to tighten its grip on Karachi.⁶⁵ The government is still in the position to roll-back the TTP's spreading Karachi network, yet Karachi's police force continues to downplay the TTP threat to the city, insisting that the number of tribal militants operating in Karachi is low.⁶⁶ Analysts suspect that the police want to avoid the perception that they have failed to maintain law-and-order in the city. If Pakistan fails to confront these developments soon, the TTP's Karachi network will weaken the city's overall security and stability, and this will have a national impact on Pakistan.

Nevertheless, although the TTP's influence in Karachi is alarming, the city will not "fall" to the Taliban. Karachi is home to powerful liberal secular elements, as well as progressive political parties such as the MQM, PPP and ANP.⁶⁷ It does not share a border with either Afghanistan or the tribal areas, which will at least slow the TTP's ability to infiltrate the city. These factors will help restrain the TTP from rapid advances.

Zia Ur Rehman is a journalist and researcher who covers militancy and politics in Pakistan. He has written for The Friday Times, The Jamestown Foundation, The News International, The National and has contributed to the New York Times. He is also the author of the book Karachi in Turmoil.

A Review of the French-led Military Campaign in Northern Mali

By Derek Henry Flood

ON JANUARY 11, 2013, at the behest of Mali's enfeebled interim government led by President Dioncounda Traore, the French military launched Operation Serval after convoys of Salafi-jihadi rebels careened into the town of Konna in Mali's vulnerable central Mopti Region during January 9-10. The alliance of al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Ansar Eddine, and the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) had been solidifying since the various rebel movements ejected the presence of the Malian state in late March 2012. The fall of Konna threatened Mali's army garrison in Sevare, the northernmost limit of central government control. MUJAO's Oumar Ould Hamaha boasted: "We took the barracks and we control all of the town of Konna...the soldiers fled, abandoning their heavy weapons and armored vehicles."¹

As the militants began to consolidate control over the Sahelian communities of the Niger River plains and the Malian Sahara, evidence supports that they were in the nascent stages of forming an Islamic state replete with Shari`a courts and Islamic police meting out brutal public punishments to alleged criminals.² The Salafist leadership in Timbuktu and Gao were in contact with AQIM's *amir*, Abdelmalek Droukdel (also known as Abu Mus`ab al-Wadud), who is based in northern Algeria.³

The Associated Press recovered a manifesto from the grounds of the state television station in Timbuktu that was purportedly written by Droukdel. In the document, Droukdel rebuked his colleagues for their clumsy implementation of Shari`a, which he believed risked alienating local populations who were unlearned in

the ways of Salafism.⁴ Contrary to the stereotype of a nihilistic jihadist run amok, the 79-page document clearly illustrated a desire for state formation with some trappings of a functioning administration with an interim government and a constitution based on Shari`a.⁵

This article examines the regional and international response to the Salafi-jihadi conquest of northern Mali, how the militants have responded to their rapid losses, and the new challenges facing international forces and Mali's government going forward. It finds that the successes achieved by the French in northern Mali are not sustainable over the long-term unless the country achieves progress in internal reconciliation.

The Regional Response

From the outset of the joint Tuareg separatist and Salafi-jihadi takeover of northern Mali, regional state actors were beset with two concerns: was it only a matter of time before the conflict would spill over into their respective territories, and would this conflict eventually pull their own regular militaries into Mali? The response across the spectrum was anything but uniform. Algeria publicly maintained its long-held stated policy of non-intervention, but made a situation specific exception and quietly allowed overflight rights to French fighter jets to attack Mali-based militants.⁶ Nigerian President Mahamadou Issoufou was especially concerned with the threat Mali-based militants posed to the renewed destabilization of northern Niger. When asked if an assembled Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) force should enter the fray in northern Mali, Issoufou told an interviewer without hesitation in June 2012: "Of course...now it is time for ECOWAS to take all the necessary measures to regain the territorial integrity of Mali."⁷

65 Personal interview, Shahi Syed, Sindh president of Awami National Party and a member of Pakistani Senate, Karachi, Pakistan, April 7, 2013.

66 Aarfeen.

67 Personal interview, Muhammad Nafees, a Karachi-based independent security analyst, Karachi, Pakistan, April 16, 2013.

1 Tiemoko Diallo, "Mali Islamists Capture Strategic Town, Residents Flee," Reuters, January 10, 2013.

2 "Mali-Al-Qaida's Sahara Playbook," Associated Press, February 6, 2013.

3 "Aqim Leader Condemns Destruction of Mali Mausoleums in Secret Papers Found by RFI Journalist," Radio France Internationale, February 25, 2013.

4 Ibid.

5 "Mali-Al-Qaida's Sahara Playbook"; Jean-Louis Le Touzet, "La feuille de route d'Aqmi au Mali," *Libération*, February 25, 2013.

6 "Algeria Authorises France to Use Airspace for Mali Raids," Agence France-Press, January 13, 2013.

7 Folly Bah Thibault, "It Was Not Necessary to Kill Gaddafi," *al-Jazira*, June 8, 2012.

Macky Sall, the president of neighboring Senegal, waffled about whether to commit Senegalese troops in an intervention scenario. Even after the French intervened, Sall remained publicly concerned about a militant spillover into Senegal, explaining, “Senegal being a neighboring country to Mali, it of course pays very close attention to these developments.”⁸

The security architecture of the ECOWAS collective was regularly put forth as a mechanism to recapture Mali’s lost regions. Yet two neighboring states whose input mattered, Mauritania and Algeria, were glaringly not members of ECOWAS. In fact, ECOWAS was close to operational irrelevance at the outset of Operation Serval because France-allied Chad, a non-ECOWAS member state, ended up committing the largest number of foreign troops behind the French—becoming the key regional military actor in the subsequent fight against the Salafi-jihadis.

The International Community’s Response

In March 2012, the international community verbally condemned the partition of the Malian republic but opted against taking immediate military action against the rebels. By June 2012, the Salafi-jihadis had dislodged their armed peer competitors, the Tuareg Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA), from northern Mali’s principal cities and towns. What followed was a *de facto* strategy of containment while a host of international bodies—including the United Nations, ECOWAS and the African Union (AU)—slowly deliberated about how to resolve Mali’s crisis.⁹

On December 20, 2012, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 2085, paving the way for the African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA).¹⁰ A number of intervention scenarios were devised with the central element being that a coalition of regional indigenous military forces would take the lead in

the fight, backed up logistically by a rear guard coalition of Western militaries.¹¹ This strategy had an inherent flaw in that it relied on the precept that the Salafi-jihadi rebels would probably not advance southward and instead wait to negotiate a settlement with Mali’s fragile interim administration and military junta. All such plans unraveled literally overnight when heavily armed Salafi-jihadi rebels finally attempted to occupy more territory by invading Konna in mid-January 2013.

Concerned that Ansar Eddine, MUJAO, and AQIM could invade Mali’s capital, French forces launched a full-scale military intervention to wrest rebel-controlled areas of Mopti Region and neutralize Islamist control of the three northern regions of Gao, Timbuktu and Kidal. French President Francois Hollande indicated that the coordinated attack on Konna threatened not only the Malian garrison in Sere, but was clearly an existential threat to the rump government led by Dioncounda Traore in the south, announcing that the rebels “have even tried to deal a fatal blow to the very existence of Mali.”¹² Paris also had a strong interest in trying to rescue seven French nationals and a dual French-Portuguese man held captive by AQIM and MUJAO in northern Mali.¹³

Paris quickly mobilized forward deployed forces at its airbase in N’Djamena, Chad. French Mirage and Rafale fighter jets flew bombing sorties over central and northern Mali while the government of President Hollande negotiated with key allies to assist the French military with its heavy airlift capacity to rapidly transport armored personnel carriers and other materiel into Bamako, Mali’s capital.¹⁴

All of these actions were completed under the official rubric of providing support to Mali’s disheveled army that had suffered from defections and deadly infighting since the onset of the current bout of rebellion in January 2012.¹⁵ From the first salvos of the reconquest of Mali’s battered north, the mission was unequivocally spearheaded by French decision makers, with their Malian counterparts a distant second.

Employment of Asymmetric Tactics

As French troops, followed by their Malian counterparts, swept into the cities of Gao and Timbuktu with relative ease after a number of French airstrikes, ground forces faced little to no initial resistance from the Salafi-jihadi rebel coalition. In the early days of the intervention, Salafi-jihadi fighters seemed to melt away, leaving population centers in droves via their ubiquitous Toyota “technical”¹⁶ and nimble motorbikes. The rebels avoided direct confrontation with the newly arrived conventional forces.¹⁷ The deployment of French, Chadian and other military contingents in northern Mali radically altered the threat posed to central Mali.

Rather than the formal frontline that threatened the Malian capital with a southward militant creep as seen in the attack on the town of Konna in central Mopti Region, Mali and its allies now faced a dispersed threat. Fleeing militants sought sanctuary in sympathetic villages or in the rough-hewn northern-most redoubts in Kidal Region, an area that has been exploited by Tuareg rebels for decades.

On February 8, 2013, an Arab suicide bomber disguised as a paramilitary soldier drove a motorbike up to a Malian military checkpoint in Gao,

8 Scott Malone, “Senegal Worried about Risk of Militants Entering From Mali: President,” Reuters, March 8, 2013.

9 “African and EU Leaders to Hold Mali Summit,” al-Jazeera, October 19, 2012.

10 “Security Council Authorizes Deployment of African-led International Support Mission to Mali for Initial Year-Long Period,” UN Security Council, December 20, 2012.

11 “West Africa Bloc Ecowas Agrees to Deploy Troops to Mali,” BBC, November 11, 2012.

12 Jamey Keaten and Sylvie Corbet, “France: Ready to Stop Advance of Mali Rebels,” Associated Press, January 11, 2013.

13 None of the hostages were recovered, and AQIM issued a statement in March claiming that it beheaded one of the hostages in response to the French intervention. See “French FM Says Troops in Mali Focused on Freeing Hostages,” Agence France-Press, March 19, 2013; “Fabius: ‘No Confirmation’ Yet For the Execution of the French Hostage Philip Verdun,” Agence Nouakchott d’Information, March 25, 2013.

14 Douglas Barrie, James Hackett and Henry Boyd, “Be-

hind the Mali Headlines, an Issue of Airlift,” International Institute for Strategic Studies, January 30, 2013.

15 Andrew McGregor, “Red Berets, Green Berets: Can Mali’s Divided Military Restore Order and Stability?” *Terrorism Monitor* 11:4 (2013).

16 The term “technical” refers to 4x4 vehicles mounted with recoilless rifles of varying calibers or rocket launchers. The weaponization of Toyota Hilux pickup trucks is thought to have originated in the Chadian-Libyan conflict in the 1980s. The term “technical” later arose in Somalia in the 1990s.

17 “French and Malian Troops Enter Diabaly,” al-Jazeera, January 22, 2013.

killing himself and wounding a Malian soldier.¹⁸ The martyrdom operation was quickly claimed by Abou Walid Sahraoui, MUJAO's spokesman, stating: "We claim today's attack against the Malian soldiers who chose the side of the miscreants, the enemies of Islam." This marked the first suicide attack in Mali since the French intervention, and it would begin a wave of similar insurgent actions.¹⁹

As if to demonstrate a coordinated campaign were underway, a second suicide bomber struck the same Malian checkpoint at Gao's entrance the following night.²⁰ The outcome of that follow-up operation was nearly identical; only the bomber was killed and

"To carry out its counterterrorism operations, the French military has struck a tacit alliance with the same group that instigated the January 2012 rebellion in the north, in a new alliance against the AQIM-linked militias."

one Malian soldier was reported injured with Malian forces disseminating the absolute minimum of information about the incident, stating only that they believed the young man was Arab and a member of MUJAO.²¹ Although these initial incidents were abject failures in terms of producing mass casualties, they were successful in announcing that MUJAO and its allies intended to wage asymmetric warfare against conventional military forces. Following the two suicide bombings, Islamist

fighters launched a fierce raid in Gao's city center, catching Malian troops off guard. A French-led counterassault ensued, resulting in a MUJAO defeat.²²

MUJAO remained undeterred, and its incipient martyrdom campaign in northern Mali did not cease. Four months into the foreign military intervention, suicide bombers launched twin attacks in the Gao region, striking Nigerien troops in Menaka and Malian troops in Gossi on May 10, 2013.²³

Mountain Redoubt

In the last major forward logistical phase of Operation Serval, French troops deployed into Kidal city, the capital of Kidal Region, on January 30. French and Chadian forces then established their presence in the lightly populated Saharan garrison towns of Aguelhok and Tessalit on February 7 and 8, respectively.²⁴ In doing so, Franco-Chadian forces partially encircled the Ifoghas and Tigharghar mountains.

This sparse, rocky region has served as a refuge and supply depot during past bouts of Tuareg rebellion.²⁵ Its inaccessible terrain—pockmarked with caves, coupled with pools of fresh water—makes it ideal guerrilla country. Its isolation and the fact that it is currently surrounded on the Malian side by Franco-Chadian military camps, however, will likely make it difficult for the Islamists to resupply once their prepositioned provisions are expended. Bilal ag Cherif, the secretary-general of the MNLA, emphasized the importance of the Tigharghar mountains to AQIM: "there are a number of places where you will find AQIM such as west of Timbuktu but [the] Tigharghar [mountains are] their anchor point. This is where you will find the bulk of their forces, [as well as] matériel. The current battle is of utmost importance."²⁶

In Kidal city, French troops and their Chadian allies have struck an accord of sorts with the MNLA and an Ansar Eddine splinter group calling itself the Islamic Movement of Azawad (MIA) led by Alghabass ag Intallah who publicly parted ways with Iyad ag Ghaly.²⁷ In the wake of the French air campaign, MNLA fighters opportunistically reentered Kidal city just ahead of the advancing French and Chadian contingents. The MNLA's leadership has made it clear that Malian troops—such as those now back in Gao and Timbuktu—would in no way be welcomed back into Kidal. The French and Chadians decided that they would work with militant groups on the ground who were not diametrically opposed to their presence. In effect, to carry out its counterterrorism operations, the French military struck a tacit alliance with the same group that instigated the January 2012 rebellion in the north, in a new alliance against the AQIM-linked militias. This strategic pragmatism, however, means that a large swath of northern Mali is still not under the control of Mali's own military.

Although the official media arm of the French Ministry of Defense described a February reconnaissance mission in the Ifoghas mountains as being comprised of "combined French and Malian troops,"²⁸ the only Malian forces at work with foreign forces in the offensive in the Ifoghas mountains are ethnic Tuareg militiamen under the command of the pro-Bamako Colonel El Hadj ag Gamou.²⁹ The implicit understanding

February 28, 2013.

27 "Mali: des membres d'Ansar Dine font sécession et créent leur propre mouvement," Radio France Internationale, January 24, 2013.

28 "Établissement de communication et de production audiovisuelle de la Défense, Mission de reconnaissance dans le massif de Adrar," French Ministry of Defense, February 19, 2013.

29 After pledging a "phony" allegiance to the MNLA to avoid confronting Ghaly's Ansar Eddine fighters, Gamou, who fled across the border to safety in Niger with somewhere between 400-600 loyalist men under his command in late March 2012, returned to Gao Region with Chadian and Nigerien soldiers. While he sent the bulk of his troops to accompany French units in the towns of Bourem and Menaka, he dispatched 19 of his men to serve as local guides in the rugged Ifoghas mountains as Franco-Chadian forces scoured for AQIM encampments. See Paul Mbenm, "Colonel Alhaji Ag Gamou: Les raisons d'une desertion," *L'Independent*, April 2, 2013; "La guerre

18 Krista Larson and Baba Ahmed, "Locals: Mali Suicide Bomber Tied to Terror Leader," Associated Press, February 8, 2013.

19 Marc Bastian, "Mali Hit by First Suicide Bombing," Agence France-Presse, February 8, 2013.

20 Sia Kambou, "Suicide Blast in North Mali's Gao, No Other Wounded," Agence France-Presse, February 10, 2013.

21 Krista Larson, "Mali Town of Gao Hit by 2nd Suicide Bomber Attack," Associated Press, February 10, 2013.

22 "Mali: un commando islamiste attaque la ville de Gao," Agence France-Presse, February 10, 2013.

23 "Five Bombers Die in Attacks on Troops in Mali," Agence France-Presse, May 10, 2013.

24 Thierry Oberlé, "Les otages français en danger après la mort d'Abou Zeid," *Le Figaro*, March 1, 2013.

25 Andrew McGregor, "Rebel Leader Turned Counter-Terrorist: Tuareg's Ag Bahanga," *Militant Leadership Monitor* 1:3 (2010).

26 Jean-Philippe Rémy, "Dans les roches de l'Adrar de Tigharghar, une bataille cruciale est engagée," *Le Monde*,

during the early war phase of Operation Serval was that Malian regular troops would not move north of the Niger River valley, as Paris wanted to avoid a secondary conflict from concomitantly occurring between the reemerging MNLA and Malian regular forces. As northern militants shuffle allegiances and rebrand their movements, the fight is not over from Bamako's perspective.

As French and Chadian units fanned out deeper into the parched valleys and massive boulders of Kidal Region, they finally confronted AQIM directly. AQIM was entrenched in the Ametetai Valley situated approximately midway between Tessalit and Aguelhok due east in the Tigharghar region west of the Ifoghas mountains. French commanders—who claimed to have killed some 100 militants—estimated that the jihadists had planned to use the remote area as a base of operations for the foreseeable future.³⁰ To prevent jihadists from slipping over the border to Algeria, a risky three-pronged assault was prepared in late February 2013. A column of French troops moved northward from Aguelhok while a separate French column parachuted in from north of the valley and an independent Chadian one moved south from Tessalit to ensnare AQIM in the Ametetai Valley.³¹ Of the three formations, the Chadian column had the most grave encounter with the fleeing Salafi-jihadis, evidenced by a reported 25 Chadian soldiers, and 65 militants, killed in three separate ambush encounters.³²

Troops then swept arduously over the terrain on foot encountering AQIM's abandoned earthen infrastructure while looking for evidence of French captives.³³

au Mali ne fait que commencer, croyez-moi," *L'Humanité*, March 1, 2013; "Mali: El Hadj Gamou échappe à une 'tentative d'assassinat' à Niamey," Agence France-Presse, December 2, 2012; "Le colonel El Hadj Gamou depuis son cantonnement de Saguia au Niger," *L'Indépendant*, June 31, 2012.

30 "Opération Serval au Mali: une centaine de jihadistes tués dans la vallée d'Ametetai," *La Voix du Nord*, March 7, 2013.

31 Philippe Chapleau, "Au combat dans la vallée d'Ametetai: retour sur le triple mouvement offensif," *Ouest France*, March 15, 2013.

32 "Mali: nouveau bilan de 25 soldats tchadiens tués après de violents combats dans le nord," Agence France-Presse, February 28, 2013.

33 AQIM regularly kidnaps Westerners throughout the Sahel. The group currently holds captive a number of French nationals. See Matthieu Mabin, "Exclusive Re-

Along with the usual caches of Soviet-era weaponry, French forces discovered that AQIM had planned well in advance for the eventuality of guerrilla war with components for improvised explosive devices and pre-assembled suicide bomb belts.³⁴ French forces found that AQIM was growing its own food in the Ametetai Valley to sustain itself far from settled populations while having access to the most important resource of all to conduct a mobile war in the Sahara: fresh water.³⁵ Although the goal of French officers was to form a tight cordon around the area, it is likely that many of the jihadists escaped.³⁶

Overall, the reconquest of northern Mali has been an ad hoc, complex affair involving a host of stakeholders with divergent interests. The French Ministry of Defense wanted to withdraw French ground forces, who numbered approximately 4,000 at the height of their deployment, in March 2013, but pragmatically scaled back its expectations due to the ferocity of the fighting on the Algerian border. They stated that a reduced number of French troops would remain until July.³⁷ Paris may begin a partial drawdown earlier, but an immediate total withdrawal of combat troops appears unlikely.

Conclusion

The initial stages of the French counterterrorism offensive in northern and central Mali were highly effective in terms of displacing Ansar Eddine, MUJAO and AQIM from their fixed positions both in the regional capitals and in the Ifoghas badlands. French airstrikes followed by large-scale northward ground incursions undid the nearly 10 months of north-south partition.

Yet Mali is nowhere near the road to internal reconciliation. The Malian army has not reached Kidal city. The MNLA is

port from Jihadist Stronghold in Mali," France 24, March 7, 2013.

34 Tiemoko Diallo, "Al Qaeda Rebels Wanted Mali as Base for Global Attacks: France," Reuters, March 8, 2013.

35 Jean-Philippe Rémy, "Voilà, on a cassé le donjon d'AQIM," *Le Monde*, March 8, 2013.

36 Thomas Fessy, "French Fight in Mali's Hostile Desert," BBC, March 25, 2013.

37 Sylvie Corbet and Angela Charlton, "Officials Say French Forces to Remain in Mali Until at Least July," Associated Press, March 1, 2013.

ensconced in the security affairs of the Kidal Region with a degree of French and Chadian complicity, a situation that will likely be unsustainable following the planned French military withdrawal. The Nigerian-led AFISMA forces have yet to do any real front line engagement; the Chadians and to a much lesser extent the Nigeriens have done the only real fighting in the far north.

The MNLA entrenchment in Kidal Region has caused distinct fissures between the objectives of the Malian army versus those of AFISMA and French commanders who thus far have not equated the Tuareg MNLA separatists—who publicly welcomed the idea of foreign intervention—as a security challenge on par with the Salafi-jihadi militants.³⁸

Although French forces have begun to modestly withdraw from northern Mali along with their Chadian partners, Paris cannot extricate itself from its military mission as fast as some in the Elysée might hope.³⁹ Although the Salafi-jihadi triumvirate led by AQIM appears to have either dissolved or largely disappeared in the conflict's current stage, the war for the so-called Azawad region is by no means over.

Many questions plague the hoped for reunification of the Malian state. The perennial Tuareg question remains as yet unanswered. The reintegration of northern Mali into Bamako's orbit is further hampered by transnational narcotics trafficking, a refugee crisis, food insecurity and now the threat of Salafi-jihadi insurgency. Putting Mali back together will be a long and dusty road.

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38 Zine Cherfaoui, "Le MNLA dans le collimateur de la Cédéao," *El Watan*, May 14, 2013.

39 Djamilia Ould Khettab, "Les premiers soldats français quittent le Mali," *Algerie-Focus*, April 11, 2013.

Mali's Challenges Post-French Intervention

By Anouar Boukhars

ON JANUARY 11, 2013, French forces began a military offensive in northern Mali to unseat a coalition of Salafi-jihadi militant groups who had taken control of the major population centers in early 2012. While the offensive has been successful, the militants have not been defeated. The Malian army is still weak and disorganized, and the African forces deployed to secure the north face a number of challenges. Islamist militants retain a significant ability to be a major nuisance for stability operations, reconstruction and peace-building. Inter-communal tensions and mistrust still prevail in the north, which are compounded by the excesses and abuses of the Malian army.¹ Tensions in the Tuareg stronghold of Kidal are especially high, as the secular National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) refuses to disarm or submit to Bamako's authority.

The situation in the capital of Bamako is slightly better. The French intervention has empowered the interim civilian authorities, but the coup leaders still maintain influence.² Public opinion in the south is also increasingly hardening against compromise with the Tuareg MNLA rebels,³ and the temptation of opportunistic political actors to stoke nationalism and stir the flames of ethnic animosity is strong. The electoral calendar set by the interim authorities is ambitious, but unless the many logistical hurdles are overcome, the July

presidential contest might exacerbate tensions and create more unrest. There is a risk that a large number of displaced people and refugees will not be able to participate in the vote, and such disenfranchisement could endanger the prospect for peace and stability.

This article assesses the security and political challenges that complicate the process of stabilizing Mali. It examines the complex local and regional dynamics that can make or break international efforts to win the peace. It finds that the military gains achieved by the French and Chadians in northern Mali cannot be consolidated without fostering a political process that promotes reconciliation and extensive consultation with all stakeholders. Putting Mali "back together" also requires that the international community and the main regional actors harmonize their views, align their efforts in fighting transnational terrorist groups, and stem the trafficking of arms, drugs, and other illicit products.

Uncertainty Amid Troop Drawdown

The January 2013 French intervention stopped Mali's quick descent into chaos. After a dramatic year of armed insurrection, civil strife and militants' conquest of huge swathes of territory, al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Ansar Eddine and the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) are in retreat. The French army, backed by Chadian troops, rolled back the jihadist offensive and chased them out of the main cities in the north. The campaign to dislodge AQIM from its sanctuary in the Ifoghas mountains by the Algerian border is underway, as is the more difficult task of securing Timbuktu, Gao, Kidal, and towns on the Niger River. The French are anxious to bring major combat operations to an end so that they can pass the baton to a UN peacekeeping mission of 11,200 troops and 1,440 police.⁴ The UN mission is expected to be given a robust mandate under chapter VII to contain armed groups, secure the major urban centers, protect civilians and oversee the political process. It will be supported by a parallel permanent force of 1,000 French troops that will focus primarily on counterterrorism.

The French troop drawdown plan, however, is complicated by a decrepit and undisciplined Malian army, the unreadiness of the African force to do the heavy lifting of keeping the peace,⁵ uncertain prospects of intercommunal reconciliation, and the MNLA's control of Kidal. The Malian army has not set foot in Kidal since its liberation from the grip of Ansar Eddine on January 28, 2013.⁶ Tuareg rebels from the MNLA oppose any Malian military presence in this historic bastion of the Tuareg in northeastern Mali.⁷

In the capital Bamako, the tone is equally virulent and defiant. The population seeks a reconquest of Kidal.⁸ As a recent International Crisis Group report warned, the risk of a military confrontation in Kidal between a vengeful Malian army and

5 Rémi Carayol, "Guerre au Mali: la Misma, faible force," *Jeune Afrique*, April 16, 2013.

6 The armed revolt against Malian forces began on January 17, 2012, exactly six months after the Tuareg returned home from Libya. It was led by the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA), an organization established in October 2011 and comprised of a mosaic of armed groups bound by loose loyalties and conditional alliances. The MNLA, which declared the independence of Azawad on April 6, 2012, was forced to cede ground to armed Islamist forces—led by the radical Islamist group Ansar Eddine—who were cash rich and better armed. The French intervention in northern Mali in early 2013 allowed the MNLA to reclaim control of Kidal. See Rémi Carayol, "Mali: à Kidal, tout reste à faire," *Jeune Afrique*, April 16, 2013.

7 Tuareg civilians and light skinned Arabs are also scared of a vengeful army exacting revenge on those suspected of participating in the rebellion that chased Malian troops out of the north. Islamists accused of belonging to armed movements are especially enticing targets for soldiers who are poorly trained and supervised. When they were in control of the north, radical Islamists terrorized the population with the imposition of draconian punishments (public executions, amputations and whippings). The MNLA also committed its share of killings, pillage and rape against black women. In the attack in Aguelhoc on January 24, 2012, the MNLA and Islamist rebels are accused of executing dozens of Malian soldiers. The temptation for soldiers who are bitter, often violent, to strike back is real. On the incident in Aguelhoc, see "Nord-Mali: Raincourt parle d'une 'centaine' d'exécutions sommaire à Aguelhoc," *Jeune Afrique*, February 13, 2012; "Mali Says Soldiers, Civilians Executed During Tuareg Clashes," Agence France-Press, February 13, 2012.

8 Personal interviews, Malian civil society actors and several security officials working on Mali, Dakar, Senegal, May 6-10, 2013.

1 Several human rights organizations (Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and the International Federation for Human Rights) and news agencies have already documented cases of abuse, torture and executions committed by Malian soldiers. See "Mali: Prosecute Soldiers for Abuses," Human Rights Watch, February 21, 2013; "Mali: First Assessment of the Human Rights Situation after Three Week Conflict," Amnesty International, February 1, 2013; "Abuses Committed by Malian Military: Urgent Need for an Independent Investigation Commission," International Federation for Human Rights, January 23, 2013.

2 In March 2012, the Malian military overthrew the democratically-elected government of Amadou Toumani Touré.

3 "Mali: sécuriser, dialoguer et réformer en profondeur," International Crisis Group, April 11, 2013.

4 Flavia Krause-Jackson, "UN Security Council Approves 11,200 Troops to Stabilize Mali," Bloomberg, April 25, 2013.

Tuareg rebels cannot be discounted.⁹ This is exacerbated by the divisions, competitions and mistrust between and among the different communities in the region. Even within the Tuareg tribes, divisions and antagonisms run deep.¹⁰ The aristocratic Ifoghas and their allies are, for example, pitted against the Imrad vassals and their Arab and Tuareg associates.

Before his strategy backfired, Amadou Toumani Touré, the president of Mali from 2002 to 2012, exploited these divisions, opportunistically dispensing favors and playing groups and tribes against one another.¹¹ His strategy of preventing the thinly populated and expansive peripheral northern zones of Kidal, Gao, and Timbuktu (which comprise two-thirds of the country but only 10% of the population) from slipping into armed insurgency was based on outsourcing state functions to Tuareg clans of lower status, opportunist local elites, and manageable Arab armed factions and militias.¹² As a result, “Tuareg tribes of aristocratic descent saw their hitherto dominant position in Kidal region increasingly eroded,” wrote Wolfram Lacher, a senior researcher at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs.¹³ This unsettling of the status quo and creation of new vested interests, buttressed by criminal associations and tactical alliances, is what contributed in the first place to the conflict in Mali and currently still

complicates the search for a peaceful resolution to the crisis as different and rival groups jostle to carve out a prominent role in any power-sharing agreement with Bamako.

The decision of Chad’s president, Idriss Déby, to start withdrawing his 2,000 soldiers from northern Mali, especially Kidal, complicates matters further. Chadian troops fought alongside French forces in the far north mountains in Mali as well as helped stabilize the northeastern Saharan outposts of the region of Kidal. The changing nature of the war, the mounting death toll of Chadian soldiers—at least 30 so far—and the rising financial costs of military operations have all contributed to the rush to exit Mali.¹⁴ “The Chadian army does not have the skills to fight a shadowy, guerrilla-style war that is taking place in northern Mali,” President Déby stated.¹⁵ Chadian troops might still contribute to the future UN peacekeeping force, but their withdrawal might leave the Kidal region in a precarious situation.

The African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA) is still a weak force to take over the fight against violent extremist groups and handle security in the liberated areas.¹⁶ Although the deployment of AFISMA to Mali was swift and widely applauded by the international community, the African battalions—with the exception of the Chadian soldiers—arrived in the theater of conflict ill-equipped and ill-prepared

for combat.¹⁷ They lack funding,¹⁸ the transportation capability to project power¹⁹ and reconnaissance and combat aircraft to survey targets in a huge area of operations.²⁰ AFISMA also suffers from lack of interoperability of its contingents. Problems in communication, cooperation, and integration will be major impediments to a successful military operation, especially when there is not yet a clear and legitimate command structure.

The Malian army is also incapable of securing the territories and military gains won by French and Chadian forces. It is demoralized, disorganized, and plagued by factionalism.²¹ It also possesses mostly antiquated military equipment and vehicles. The military junta that toppled the government in March 2012 in an effort to ostensibly save the integrity of the state threw the army into further disarray. To use the words of French General Francois Lecointre, the force is “unstructured” and “incapable of planning for the future.”²² The challenge of reversing institutional deterioration, fostering civilian oversight and creating a cohesive, disciplined and well-equipped force is daunting.

The European Union Training Mission in Mali (EUTM) is planning to rectify these problems by training four battalions of 650 soldiers during a period of 15 months. The focus will be on basic firearms skills such as target practice. The trainers will also “provide theoretical classes that will include modules on complying with

9 “Mali: sécuriser, dialoguer et réformer en profondeur”; Carayol, “A Kidal: Tour Reste A faire.”

10 See Pierre Boilley, “Géopolitique africaine et rébellions touarègues. Approches locales, approches globales (1960-2011),” *L’Année du Maghreb* VII (2011): pp. 151-162; Baz Lecocq, *Disputed Desert: Decolonisation, Competing Nationalisms and Tuareg Rebellions in Northern Mali* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2010).

11 This strategy of governance was ultimately unsustainable. It exacerbated ethnic and tribal tensions and left the structural problems of underdevelopment and poverty that produced the rebellions of 1963, the 1990s, and 2006-2009 unattended. Worse, it was built upon shaky and unreliable alliances.

12 See Anouar Boukhars, “The Paranoid Neighbor: Algeria and the Conflict in Mali,” in Fred Wehrey and Anouar Boukhars eds., *Perilous Desert: Insecurity in the Sahel* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2013), pp. 87-117.

13 Wolfram Lacher and Denis M. Tull, “Mali: Beyond Counterterrorism,” German Institute for International and Security Affairs, February 2013.

14 According to Roland Marchal, a senior fellow at the National Center for Scientific Research, President Déby “could also be using the threat of withdrawal as a bargaining tool to get more money from France and other Western countries.” See Xan Rice, “‘Guerrilla’ Conflict Makes Chad Quit Mali,” *Financial Times*, April 15, 2013.

15 Ibid.

16 At a U.S. congressional hearing in April 2013, the assistant secretary of defense for special operations, Michael Sheehan, described African forces in Mali as “completely incapable” and not “up to the task” of fighting radical Islamist militants. He said, “Right now, the ECOWAS force isn’t capable at all. What you saw there, it is a completely incapable force. That has to change.” See “ECOWAS Force in Mali is ‘Incapable’: US Official,” Agence France-Presse, April 9, 2013.

17 The first contingents from Niger, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Togo, Benin and Ghana arrived immediately after the French intervened to stop the jihadist offensive. On the weakness, see Carayol, “Guerre au Mali: la Misma, faible force.”

18 Out of the \$450 million requested by ECOWAS, only \$16 million was disbursed. See Alexandra Geneste and Nathalie Guibert, “Mali: la France peut-elle partir?” *Le Monde*, March 29, 2013.

19 For example, it took 500 Senegalese troops several weeks to redeploy to Mali.

20 So far, AFISMA has only two aerial surveillance aircraft, four alpha light jets based in Niamey, Niger, and half a dozen attack helicopters. See Carayol, “Guerre au Mali: la Misma, faible force.”

21 “Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Mali,” United Nations Security Council, March 26, 2013.

22 Aline Glaudot, “Training of Mali’s Armed Forces Begins,” *Europolitics*, April 5, 2013.

humanitarian law.”²³ The first battalion is slated to be ready by September 2013. Most experts, however, agree that for the mission to succeed, its duration must be prolonged and the flaws that dogged previous training missions must be rectified. The United States spent millions of dollars training Malian soldiers only to see hundreds of them, including top commanders, flee or defect to the rebels’ side.²⁴

Transnational Threats

Even if EU and U.S. efforts succeed in bolstering the capacity of the Malian army, it will not alone be able to tackle problems that are by their very nature transnational, some of which are propped up and supported by powerful political, military and economic networks. It is common knowledge that top officials in Mali’s government and military actively colluded with organized crime.²⁵ The drug trafficking business still flourishes in Mauritania and Niger. In both countries, the groups that control drug trafficking are influential and are known locally—which demonstrates their impunity.²⁶ Mali is also a transit area for the illicit trafficking of cannabis and other drugs. Well-established networks of Moroccans, Sahrawis, Mauritians, Algerians, Libyans, Nigeriens and Malians are involved.²⁷

Mali has traditionally played a central part in the trans-Saharan illicit trade, including trafficking of goods, cigarettes and arms. The arrival in mid-2005 of Latin American cocaine in the Sahel dramatically changed the face of criminality in the region and transformed social, political and economic power balances in Mali.²⁸

There are multiple desert routes to move drugs and illicit goods in the Sahel. The most known routes depart from coastal towns in Guinea and Mauritania, passing through northern Mali and into Algeria and Libya, then Egypt and the Middle East, before reaching their final destinations in Europe.²⁹ In each of these countries, there are networks of drivers and handlers that enjoy the protection of civilian and military authorities.³⁰

International stakeholders continued to dispense economic and military aid to these countries despite the states’ unwillingness or inability to crack down on drug activity. In Mali, the dispensing of foreign aid coincided with a dramatic increase in organized criminal activity.³¹ It is crucial, therefore, for the international community to assess state willingness and capacity.

The control of criminal activity requires more than just capable national institutions. The willingness of state actors to thwart the criminal marketplace and the financial flows of trafficking proceeds is critically important. Without such resolve, externally led efforts to empower the executive branch and prop up its coercive apparatus—namely, the military, police, and judiciary—can be counterproductive. A state that lacks capable institutional capacities but has leaders determined to fight terrorism and organized crime is the most suitable candidate for capacity building.³²

Eddine.

29 “Mali: sécuriser, dialoguer et réformer en profondeur”; Lacher, *Organized Crime and Conflict in the Sabel-Sahara Region*.

30 Ibid.

31 Lacher, *Organized Crime and Conflict in the Sabel-Sahara Region*.

32 In the West, Mauritania is generally considered the least problematic state in the Sahel. Its president, Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, has portrayed himself as tough on national security. Nigerien President Mahamadou Issoufou is also appreciated for his firm stand against terrorism. His country is seriously threatened by several transnational terrorist actors originating in Libya and Nigeria. In this context, it makes sense that international donors have supported Issoufou’s programs for security and development. It could be argued, however, that this support should be conditional on democratic accountability and the implementation of verifiable and concrete anticorruption measures. See Luis Simon, Alexander Mattelaer, and Amelia Hadfield, “A Coherent EU Strategy for the Sahel,” European Parliament, May 2011.

Therefore, the French push to establish military control across the north and mop-up the remnants of jihadist groups and armed gangsters from their sanctuaries in the Ifoghas and Tigharghar mountains will not eliminate the threats to Mali. Even if AQIM and its allies are defeated in Mali, the main security threats will persist as long as governments lack the will to thwart terrorist and criminal activity.

Opportunities for regional terrorist recruitment and arms supplies are manifold. The refugee camps in neighboring countries are especially of concern. The UN secretary general recently warned about the vulnerability of the Sahrawis in the Polisario-controlled refugee camps in northwest

“In Mali, imported radical religious ideas justifying the recourse to armed struggle have penetrated society, contributing to the radicalization of religious discourse and fueling a contemporary wave of extremism.”

Algeria to radicalization and terrorist infiltration.³³ It is the first time that a senior UN official acknowledged what many experts have been describing for years as a “ticking time bomb.” The same fears apply to the refugee camps in Mauritania and Niger where displaced Malians live in “appalling” conditions.³⁴ Organized criminals and extremist groups will continue to exploit the fragility of states, frozen conflicts such as the Western Sahara, and the lack of regional security cooperation.

The international community can help mitigate external pressures by promoting regional cooperation in sharing intelligence, monitoring financial flows from drug trafficking,

23 Ibid.

24 Lydia Polgreen, “Mali Army, Riding U.S. Hopes, Is Proving No Match for Militants,” *New York Times*, January 24, 2013.

25 Wolfram Lacher, *Organized Crime and Conflict in the Sabel-Sahara Region* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2012); Judith Scheele, “Circulations marchandes au Sahara: Entre Licite et Illicite,” *Hérodote* 142 (2011): 143-162.

26 “Mali: sécuriser, dialoguer et réformer en profondeur.”

27 Ibid.

28 Drug money disrupted the traditional sociopolitical patterns and balance of power between and among communities. Such social upheaval contributed to the eruption of the 2012 rebellion, which saw the Imrad lining up behind the MNLA and the Ifoghas joining Ansar

33 Afua Hirsch, “Mali Conflict Could Spill Over into Western Sahara, Warns Ban Ki-moon,” *Guardian*, April 9, 2013.

34 “Mali Refugees Endure ‘Appalling’ Mauritania Camp,” BBC, April 12, 2013.

and conducting joint military operations. Thus far, international efforts have been hindered by several factors. First, Western governments and international donors have focused on propping up the capacity of individual fragile states. Insecurity, however, is a product not just of internal factors, but of external ones as well.³⁵ Second, international policy has typically overlooked the relationships and connections between conflicts in the region. Third, competition and differing perceptions of threats among neighbors hinder regional cooperation.³⁶

For example, the regional security institutional mechanisms that Algeria created to shape the regional fight against terrorism did not succeed in bolstering military and security cooperation. The Algeria-based General Staff Joint Operations Committee and Fusion and Liaison Unit need to become true forums for sharing intelligence, monitoring financial flows from drug trafficking, and conducting joint military operations. Unfortunately, fragile security in countries such as Libya and Tunisia, the opacity of the Algerian regime, and the persistent suspicion and mistrust between Morocco and Algeria over the Western Sahara dispute will make current efforts to bring peace and stability to the region extremely difficult.

Internal Radicalization

Another complicating factor in Mali is how radical elements interact with underlying local sources of instability. In Mali, imported radical religious ideas justifying the recourse to armed struggle have penetrated society, contributing to the radicalization of religious discourse and fueling a contemporary wave of extremism.³⁷ The problem of homegrown radicalization is compounded by its interconnectedness with transnational factors like illicit trafficking and regional terrorist networks. Yet it is critical to recognize

the motivational factors that lead to radicalization as well as the reasons that allowed extremist groups to successfully embed themselves in northern Mali and recruit quite

“The problem of homegrown radicalization is compounded by its interconnectedness with transnational factors like illicit trafficking and regional terrorist networks.”

easily.³⁸ The leadership of the main terrorist groups remains Algerian and Mauritanian, but their appeal to Malians and West Africans needs a careful examination.

What prompted an important number of young Malian Peuls and Songhai in Gao to join MUJAO?³⁹ Some evidently did it for financial or local reasons (fragmentation of social structures, lack of access to education, and widespread

feelings of unfairness).⁴⁰ Others joined for ideological reasons.⁴¹ The same applies to those who actively sought out the Tuareg radical group Ansar Eddine. Some of the Tuareg who joined the movement “are of the conviction that only their Salafist ideology can unify the various Tuareg clans, the different ethnic groups in the region, and even the whole of Mali.”⁴² Ansar Eddine leader Iyad ag Ghaly proposed “an alternative to both the Malian nation-state, riddled with corruption and nepotism, and the political ideal of Tuareg independence, which so far has been unable to overcome the divisive clan structures within Tuareg society.”⁴³ The first step, therefore, is to understand who seeks to join these violent extremist movements and why.

The crisis in Mali and the damage that armed Islamist groups have inflicted on the population are opportunities for Malian political and community leaders to marginalize violent extremists and discredit their narratives and ideologies.⁴⁴ The use of repressive measures to combat extremists would be unsuccessful long-term unless the sources of disillusionment and frustration are addressed. The greater the chasm between youth expectations and the capability or willingness of the state to meet them, the greater the risk that angry youths might look to non-state actors for essential goods.

38 AQIM, for example, managed to use its financial prowess to tap into the deep cultural divide in northern Mali. Occasionally, AQIM has used its Arab roots to ingratiate itself into Arab communities. Timbuktu, for example, was a stronghold of AQIM and is where the group first built its network of social and political alliances, including alliances with the Arab militias that the deposed Malian president Touré “tolerated and even maintained.” At other times, AQIM used the distrust and competition between Songhai and Peuls on the one hand and Arabs and Tuareg on the other to its advantage. The most critical factor in AQIM’s success, however, has been “more economic than cultural.” See “Counter Extremism and Development in Mali,” U.S. Agency for International Development, October 2009.

39 Little is known about MUJAO. It arrived on the scene after the abduction of three European tourists from the heavily fortified Polisario-controlled camps in Algeria in October 2011. Besides a preference for Algerian targets and a sociological makeup unique from that of AQIM (its core membership is from the Lamhar tribe, supplemented by Sahrawis, Songhai and Peuls), MUJAO has acted like its extremist counterparts, fusing criminal and radical religious activity. MUJAO, and Ansar Eddine as well, prospered greatly from the lucrative trans-Saharan trafficking trade, kidnappings of Westerners for ransom, and the bonanza of the Libyan arms bazaar.

40 In its 2008 report on countering extremism and development in Mali, USAID identified the drivers of violent extremism as “multilayered and Local in Logic.” Specifically, it noted “the North’s political isolation and economic marginality, and the divisions both within and across the ethnic fabric of the region” as key drivers of violence. See “Counter Extremism and Development in Mali.”

41 According to the European Union’s counterterrorism coordinator, Gilles de Kerchove, two-thirds of those who join terrorist and criminal organizations in the Sahel do it for financial gain or as an outlet to dramatically express their frustration. The other one-third are hardcore ideologues who are ready to die for their cause. EU intelligence estimates put the number of violent extremists between 500 and 1,000 in the Sahel. See Gilles de Kerchove, “Au Sahel, la tâche est immense,” *Le Télégramme*, January 26, 2013.

42 Lecocq, Mann, Whitehouse et al.

43 Ibid.

44 “Mali: sécuriser, dialoguer et réformer en profondeur.”

35 Events from outside can be destabilizing. For example, events in Algeria destabilized Mali. These “exogenous dynamics” necessitate a regional response to the crisis in Mali.

36 Wehrey and Boukhars.

37 Baz Lecocq, Gregory Mann, Bruce Whitehouse et al., “One Hippopotamus and Eight Blind Analysts: A Multivocal Analysis of the 2012 Political Crisis in the Divided Republic of Mali,” *Review of African Political Economy* 137 (2013).

The Road Ahead

The roots of instability and conflict in Mali are complex and run deep. Internal sources of insecurity include institutional weakness and corruption, endemic poverty, and sociopolitical tensions. Unaddressed identity-based grievances splintered the society, while legacies of past abuses and religious radicalization stirred up tensions further. Yet it is unfair to blame Bamako for pursuing a deliberate discriminatory policy against northern Mali, especially against the Tuareg.⁴⁵ Several economic projects (mainly in terms of infrastructure) were directed to the north. While their impacts on the population were limited due in part to gross mismanagement of funds and poor accountability, the problem of corrosive corruption was not only limited to the center. Powerful local elites, including Tuareg who were not appointed by Bamako, were accomplices and at times primary agents of mishandling or embezzling funds allocated to the regions.⁴⁶

Decentralization and community participation were designed as a means of conflict management and good governance, but they ended up breeding high levels of corruption and rent-seeking. It is not an exaggeration to state that a number of elected Tuareg elites and army men contributed to the criminalization, delegitimization and fall of the state.⁴⁷ The challenge today is how to reduce political corruption and rectify the imperfections in infrastructure delivery and the provision of public goods.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Lacher, *Organized Crime and Conflict in the Sabel-Sahara Region*; "Mali: sécuriser, dialoguer et réformer en profondeur."

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ To address high-level group grievances in the north, Bamako could design strategies to promote social inclusion, political integration, and economic empowerment. As the World Bank's 2011 World Development Report stated, "Signaling change to groups with grievances is often a key early priority." This can help mobilize support for transitional justice and reconciliation. International donors can support this process by investing in community development programs that promote basic social services (roads, clinics, courts, etc.) and help improve the performance of livestock production and boost cattle exports.

Current military progress in the north cannot be consolidated if it simply restores an intolerable *status quo ante*. The immediate priority should be to foster political reconciliation and send unmistakable signals that peaceful cohabitation between all the communities of the north is once again possible. This process of reassurance and reconciliation is key to the return of the hundreds of thousands of displaced northern Malians and setting the conditions that are conducive to holding credible elections. In this respect, the creation by the transitional government of Mali of a Dialogue and Reconciliation Commission in March 2013 is important.

More efforts could also focus on mobilizing state media and civil society to promote reconciliation and moderation.⁴⁹ Bamako should engage representatives from all communities in the south and north, including Islamists who renounce violence and MNLA separatists. Preconditions that the MNLA disarm before dialogue are dangerous and not encouraging. It is true that the MNLA is a minority group that does not have the support of the main Tuareg tribes, and hence cannot claim to be their legitimate representative. Yet the inclusion of the MNLA is crucial for the stabilization of Kidal.

In short, the road ahead will be long and fraught with peril. Elections are important, but they will not offer any quick fixes to Mali's problems. Unifying the country will require widespread dialogue and international assistance.

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⁴⁹ Ibid.

The Significance of Taliban Shari'a Courts in Afghanistan

By Jami Forbes

WITH THE DRAWDOWN of foreign troops and the post-International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) period quickly approaching in Afghanistan, attention has focused on the outlook for continued armed conflict between the government of Afghanistan and the Taliban. While insurgents will undoubtedly continue to plan attacks on government officials and security forces, their efforts will also focus on softer initiatives, such as expanding parallel or competitive governance through Shari'a courts.

The establishment of an Islamic state based on Shari'a law in Afghanistan has been the cornerstone of Taliban political goals since the movement began in the 1990s. The growth of Shari'a courts, therefore, will be integral to the Taliban's post-ISAF calculus. The Taliban likely recognize that their ability to provide law and order through Shari'a capitalizes on the shortcomings of the current formal judicial system in Afghanistan,¹ and they will quickly attempt to expand courts to contest Afghan government control and habituate their authority over the local populace. Measuring the development of such courts may provide an insightful barometer of Taliban influence and local control post-2014.

This article first provides background on Shari'a law and its traditional role in Afghanistan. It then identifies some vulnerabilities to the Taliban's objectives of implementing Shari'a, and offers indicators that might portend the expansion of the Taliban Shari'a court system. It finds that the military narrative often overshadows the significance of Shari'a to the Taliban, and suggests that evaluating the growth of the Taliban's courts can be a beneficial tool in judging the nature of the insurgency in Afghanistan.

¹ The shortcomings of the judicial system include limited access (particularly outside of urban areas), corruption, a lack of transparency, inadequate security, and a shortage of human capital.

Understanding Shari`a

Implementing Shari`a across Afghanistan is a strategic objective of the Taliban. Understanding what it means, and the methods in which it is employed in Afghanistan, is important. The word Shari`a in Arabic literally translates to “the path to follow” and in jurisprudential context means “ideal Islamic law.”² Shari`a is both a system of criminal justice and a religious or moral code for Muslims. Although this system is based on principles outlined in both the Qur`an and the *hadith*, the implementation of Shari`a is largely left up to the interpretation of Islamic scholars (which many Taliban senior leaders and commanders claim to be).³ This has resulted in a diverse practice of Islam, including different schools of thought.⁴ The exception is a specific set of punishments for offenses called *hudud*, or “limits,” which are considered to be the most serious crimes. These offenses are punishable by specific penalties—including stoning, lashing, or amputation of a limb—and are considered by some Islamic scholars to be immutable.⁵

During the Taliban’s regime, Shari`a was used as a means to establish (or at least project) law and order within Afghanistan. Taliban officials claimed that their ability to rule through Shari`a was misunderstood and overlooked by the outside world. For example, Sher Muhammad Stanekzai, a senior Taliban leader, stated in 1994, “By enforcement of Shari`a, we have made safe the lives and property of millions of people.”⁶

He also said, “This is the law that was revealed by God to Muhammad. Those who consider the imposition of this law to be against human rights are insulting all Muslims and their beliefs.”⁷

Currently, the Taliban operate Shari`a courts (and even some prisons) in several regions of Afghanistan.⁸ The Taliban were able to reopen and operate Shari`a courts in the southern provinces of Kandahar and Helmand since at least 2008, and courts have been identified in the western province of Herat, as well as in the eastern province of Paktika.⁹ These courts dispense judgment on criminal as well as civil cases. This means that the Taliban can conduct trials of spies (creating a deterrent for behavior that may harm their movement) as well as provide services to the local populace, such as enacting punishment for thieves or resolving civil matters such as land disputes. As a result, the Taliban are able to establish local-level legitimacy and transform Shari`a courts and rule of law into authority (particularly in rural areas where the Afghan government has had difficulty establishing its own legitimacy).

Shari`a, however, is much more than just a mechanism to gain local control. It is also the foundation of Taliban governance and used to underpin the cohesion and legitimacy of the movement. According to Abdul Salam Zaeef, the former Taliban ambassador to Pakistan, the Taliban believe that only a society based on Shari`a law is living honorably or within “God’s orders.”¹⁰ Given the significance of Shari`a as both a means, and an end, for the Taliban, the expansion of courts and the implementation of Shari`a are critical for the viability of the movement.

Why Shari`a Courts Matter to the Population

Political scientists have posited that the public will do “almost anything” and support “almost anyone” to establish security and reduce uncertainty.¹¹ Given this concept, Afghanistan’s long-term stability will be impacted by the government’s ability (or inability) to provide security and certainty through rule of law. This includes dynamics that are more closely tied to the local populace, and are often overshadowed by the predominant narrative of the Taliban versus the Afghan government. For instance, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees has stated that land-related disputes are among the most serious issues threatening the stability of Afghanistan.¹² As counterinsurgency theorists have argued, insurgencies are “20 percent military action and 80 percent political,” and successful insurgencies will challenge the state by usurping the rule of law to mobilize and control the local population.¹³

The Taliban’s provision of law capitalizes on the shortfalls of the Afghan government’s justice sector, which according to U.S. Department of Defense reporting continues to show slow progress in becoming transparent, consistent, reliable, and fair.¹⁴ There have been increases in the number of Afghan government judges being appointed and districts holding trials; however, the formal judicial system in Afghanistan has demonstrated little progress in becoming self-sustaining and little will in combating fraudulent activity. According to a February 2013 report from Afghanistan’s Tolo TV, more than 50% of the populace in Afghanistan has used Taliban court systems rather than those provided by the Afghan government due to corruption.¹⁵

2 John Esposito, *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Joseph Schnat, *An Introduction to Islamic Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964).

3 *Hadith* are the statements and actions of the Prophet Muhammad.

4 There are several legal traditions, or schools of Shari`a thought. These include Sunni schools—Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi`i and Hanbali—as well as the school of Twelver Shi`a, Ja`fari. Most of Afghanistan and Central Asia fall under the Hanafi school, from which the Taliban take a strict interpretation. For more details, see Viktor Knut, *Between God and the Sultan, A History of Islamic Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

5 The *hudud* crimes are *syrub* (drinking alcohol), *sariqa* (theft), *biraba* (armed or highway robbery), *zina* (illegal sexual intercourse or adultery), *qadhf* (false accusation of rape), and *irtidat* or *rid`a* (apostasy or blasphemy).

6 Peter Marsden, *The Taliban War, Religion, and the New World Order in Afghanistan* (Oxford: Oxford University

Press, 1994).

7 Ibid.

8 Noah Coburn and John Dempsey, *Informal Dispute Resolution in Afghanistan* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Institute of Peace, August 2010).

9 Tom Blackwell, “Taliban Rule Returning to Kandahar,” *National Post*, October 2008; Tahir Khan, “Shari`a Court Ruling: Taliban Amputate Thieves Limbs in Herat,” *Express Tribune*, April 21, 2013; David Isby, *Afghanistan: Graveyard of Empires: A New History of the Borderland* (New York: Pegasus Books, 2011).

10 Abdul Salam Zaeef, *My Life with the Taliban* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

11 Stathis Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Thomas Hobbes, *The Leviathan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

12 “Land Issues Within the Repatriation Process of Afghan Refugees,” United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, September 1, 2003.

13 David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare, Theory and Practice* (New York: Praeger, 1964); David Kilcullen, *Counterinsurgency* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

14 “Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan,” U.S. Department of Defense, December 2012.

15 “Corruption in Judicial System Leads People to Tradi-

Afghan citizens have also cited the expediency, limited cost, and access to Taliban courts as notable advantages over the formal Afghan government system. For instance, a local resident of Paktika Province stated, "The Taliban courts don't disturb people and tell them to wait for a long time before hearing a case, or demand bribes."¹⁶ A resident of Kandahar Province claimed, "I don't like our current government at all, and I don't really like the Taliban, either. But I can either spend months in the government court and pay bribes, or I can go to the Taliban and have the matter settled in one day."¹⁷ In addition, Taliban courts provide roving support to remote rural locations in Afghanistan, and may not be fixed to urban areas like many Afghan government facilities.¹⁸

Vulnerabilities of Taliban Shari`a Courts

Despite its advantages, the Taliban system is not without faults. Due to his personal security practices and the nature of conflict in the region, Taliban Supreme Leader Mullah Muhammad Omar is no longer accessible as the authoritative head of Taliban jurisprudence. Given his longstanding absence, the role of legal authority has likely been delegated to Afghan-based commanders, regional tribal leaders, or power brokers.¹⁹ This could allow for personality-based rule of law, which may cause rifts, enable retribution for previous personal conflicts, or even foster tribal favoritism. Although the Taliban have likely developed internal disciplinary mechanisms to manage such issues, the expansion of Taliban courts may complicate their ability to prohibit these practices, particularly outside of Pashtun-dominated Kandahar Province.

In addition, the Taliban will have to co-opt, marginalize, or co-exist with the informal dispute resolution systems that currently exist in Afghanistan—to

include replicating the mechanisms that are working in areas outside of their control, such as mediation by elders, tribal leaders, *shuras*, and other trusted officials. Even during the Taliban's regime, they were forced to acquiesce or negotiate with local elites and accept varying degrees of local autonomy, especially within more ethnically diverse areas such as eastern Afghanistan.

Furthermore, the insurgents are attempting to shift from the arbitrary measures that the Taliban used when they were in power. During the 1990s, the Taliban imposed their legal system through the Department for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, which operated a religious police force. The police were empowered to beat and jail offenders, often without any proof or any trial process. To prevent this from occurring again, the Taliban have taken measures to make their enforcement of Shari`a more standardized. For instance, the 2010 *layeha* (code of conduct) stated that no one is allowed to pronounce punishment decisions except Mullah Omar, his deputy, or a judge. This, however, will likely be difficult to implement throughout all areas of Afghanistan. Religious police have reportedly returned to remote Nuristan Province, for example, and are said to be enforcing arbitrary punishments for behavior without the ruling of judicial officials.²⁰ How the Taliban will regulate Shari`a in regions such as Nuristan remains unclear. In addition, even with standardization, some of the practices the Taliban employ will continue to be unpalatable to the outside world. For example, Taliban spokesman Qari Yousef Ahmadi rejected claims that the Taliban were involved in the August 2010 death of a woman who received 200 lashes and was shot for adultery based on the grounds that the proper sentence in accordance with *hudud* should have been death by stoning.²¹

Indications of an Expansion of Taliban Courts

During their regime, the Taliban operated 13 high or appellate courts in several provinces of Afghanistan.²² Although the Ministry of Justice and the Supreme Court were located in Kabul, the most powerful institution was the Kandahar Islamic Supreme Court, which appointed *qazis* (judges) and provided bi-annual training and discussions on the application of Shari`a law. Given that Taliban Shari`a

"The establishment of Shari`a courts represents the foundation of what any insurgency is looking to accomplish: to challenge the authority of the government by making inroads with the local populace."

courts are already operational in the rural regions of Kandahar Province (where insurgent parallel governance is possibly among the most robust), and due to the proximity to Taliban senior leaders in Quetta, Pakistan, it is likely that initiatives to replicate the previous bodies will be launched from this region. The development and expansion of courts in Kandahar may be an insightful gauge of the capabilities of Taliban Shari`a systems. Indicators may include the establishment of appellate courts, the issuing of official or standardized summons, and possibly the operation of trials in open arenas or public forums (free from fear of ISAF or Afghan government retribution).

In addition, an expansion would see Taliban courts spread outside of the south, particularly in the more rural areas of Afghanistan, where the populace is often skeptical of the formal Afghan government court systems. In the cases where locals have accepted informal rule of law, the Taliban will look to increase their influence over these structures. Indicators of this

tional Courts: Afghan Integrity Watch," Tolo TV, February 19, 2013.

16 Tom A. Peter, "Leery of Courts, Afghans Seek Taliban Justice," *USA Today*, March 7, 2012; Dan Murphy, "Dent in Afghan War Strategy: Why Kandahar Locals Turn to Taliban," *Christian Science Monitor*, July 6, 2010.

17 Ibid.

18 "Why the Taliban are So Strong in Afghanistan," BBC, February 2, 2012.

19 Sam Siebert, "Has Mullah Omar Lost His Mind?" *Daily Beast*, October 15, 2012.

20 Emma Graham-Harrison, "Taliban Enforcer Squads Accused of Ruthless Control in Nuristan," *Guardian*, May 1, 2012.

21 "Brutality Against Women Stirs Fear in Afghanistan," National Public Radio, August 20, 2010.

22 Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000).

may include co-opting or coercing local leaders, or even establishing power sharing agreements. Furthermore, although some Taliban courts may start off as roving, there is likely the intent to develop more permanent rule of law throughout the country. Indicators of this would be the naming of specific judges for a geographic area, and the creation of a court or possibly prison system in a dedicated building or facility.

Conclusion

Insurgents look to overthrow a government through a variety of methods, including armed conflict, as well as undermining its authority and legitimacy. While much is known about the military methods and tactics used by the Taliban against their opposition in Afghanistan, less is known about how they use subversion to gain local control. The establishment of Shari'a courts represents the foundation of what any insurgency is looking to accomplish: to challenge the authority of the government by making inroads with the local populace (in this case, through the provision of security and dispute resolution).

The Taliban likely recognize that their implementation of Shari'a in the post-ISAF period will not only help shape public opinion within Afghanistan, but also the international community. Given the desire to be recognized as a legitimate political movement, they may seek to formalize and adapt their practices so that they are more methodical and predictable.

Although the Taliban will promote their law and order agenda at first, a radical Islamist and draconian rule could emerge once enough influence or control is obtained, as it did in the 1990s. How, or if, the Taliban plan on preventing such a progression remains unclear. Examining the practices used by the Taliban will undoubtedly provide insightful indicators regarding the viabilities and capabilities of the insurgency, and will help to understand counterinsurgency writ large.

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Mexico's New Strategy to Combat Drug Cartels: Evaluating the National Gendarmerie

By Peter Chalk

IN 2012, MEXICANS ELECTED Enrique Peña Nieto of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) as president. On assuming power, Nieto pledged to reverse the militarized counternarcotics policies of his predecessor, Felipe Calderon, which he maintained were responsible for unleashing a bloody drug war that over the course of six years left thousands dead. Central to Nieto's approach is the creation of a National Gendarmerie that will henceforth assume primary responsibility for fighting drug cartels in the country.

This article evaluates Calderon's campaign against drug cartels in Mexico and outlines current plans to create the National Gendarmerie. It finds that while the Nieto government has touted the force as the first step in gradually returning the counternarcotics mission from the army to the police, it is unclear that the unit represents anything new or is relevant to the internal threat dynamics of Mexico. In fact, it may exacerbate what is already an extremely complex national law enforcement structure, in addition to significantly overstretching the functional capability of the military.

Calderon's Onslaught and its Impact on Drug Cartels in Mexico

In 2006, Felipe Calderon instituted a major counternarcotics campaign against Mexican cartels in a concerted effort to disrupt and destroy the critical nodes of drug trafficking in the country. At its height, the strategy involved the deployment of 96,000 combat troops, nearly 40% of all active personnel, to directly confront syndicates and their leaders.¹ The United States actively supported the crackdown, pledging \$1.4 billion of counternarcotics assistance for fiscal years 2008 and 2010 in what subsequently became known as the Merida Initiative.² U.S. support

continued under the Barack Obama administration, although at a somewhat lower level (\$660 million between 2011 and 2012).³

Although Calderon's policy was instrumental in eliminating several key drug lords as well as making record cocaine seizures, it had the unintended effect of unleashing a highly brutal war in the northern provinces. Over the course of six years, at least 40,000 and possibly as many as 60,000 people are thought to have died in drug-related fighting as increasingly fragmented cartels moved to engage each other and the authorities in a vicious battle over territory and sales "turf."⁴ Those targeted have included members of competing cartels, law enforcement personnel, businessmen, local government officials and ordinary civilians. Victims have been beheaded, dismembered and even skinned or boiled alive.⁵

George W. Bush and Felipe Calderon met in March 2007 to ink U.S. support for the initiative. American money was used to underwrite equipment, training and intelligence sharing for counternarcotics, counterterrorism, border security, law enforcement and general institutional building. For further details, see Peter Chalk, *The Latin American Drug Trade: Scope, Dimensions, Impact and Response* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2011), pp. 60-62.

3 "Peña Nieto's Challenge: Criminal Cartels and Rule of Law in Mexico," International Crisis Group, March 19, 2013, pp. 18-19. Also see Steve Fainaru and William Booth, "As Mexico Battles Cartels, the Army Becomes the Law," *Washington Post*, April 2, 2009.

4 "Peña Nieto's Challenge: Criminal Cartels and Rule of Law in Mexico," p. 1; Randal Archibold, "Mexico Drug War Bloodies Areas Thought Safe," *New York Times*, January 19, 2012; Ed Vulliamy and Jo Tuckman, "Failure of Drug War Brings Call for Change," *Guardian*, June 29, 2012; Damien Cave, "Mexico Updates Death Toll in Drug War to 47,515, But Critics Dispute the Data," *New York Times*, January 12, 2012; David Agren, "Mexico: Death Toll from Drug-Related Violence is Thousands Higher than was Reported Earlier," *New York Times*, August 3, 2010.

5 Most drug-related murders in Mexico are the work of syndicate-controlled paramilitary cells that operate on a contractual, "fee-for-service" basis. Notable groups include Los Negros, Los Gueritos, Los Pelones, Los Números, Los Chachos, Los Lobos, Los Sinaloa and Los Nuevos Zetas. See Chalk, *The Latin American Drug Trade*, p. 42; Ken Ellingwood, "Extreme Violence Grips Mexico Border City," *Los Angeles Times*, December 19, 2008; James McKinley, "Two Sides of a Border: One Violent, One Peaceful," *New York Times*, January 22, 2009.

1 "Calderon devolvio a 50% de la a los cuarteles," *Milenio*, December 16, 2012; "Sexto Informe de Labores," Mexican National Defense Secretariat, 2012.

2 The name is derived from the town in which Presidents

Aside from spawning extreme violence, the Merida Initiative also failed to significantly disrupt syndicate activity. Currently, 10 major cartels operate in the country (see Figure 1), competing with one another on numerous fronts and within the context of a constantly evolving pattern of strategic and tactical alliances. Of these, two cartels are especially powerful and far-reaching: the Sinaloa Federation, which is primarily based in northwest Mexico and down the Baja Peninsula; and Los Zetas, which dominates the northeast and areas around the Gulf of Mexico. Both have established links with Andean cocaine producers and each has an extensive presence in the criminal world of Central America, particularly in Guatemala.⁶

Finally, Calderon's approach had little impact on corruption. Cartels continue to enjoy an exceptionally strong influence over municipal law enforcement, which according to former Public Security Secretary Genaro Garcia currently "supplement" operational and organizational budgets with up to 1.2 billion pesos (\$94 million) of criminal money.⁷ Syndicates have also retained inroads to both the Federal Police and the judicial system, reflected by the remarkable state of impunity that presently exists in Mexico. Nationally, 80% of homicides remain unsolved, while overall criminal conviction rates currently stand at just two percent.⁸

The Enrique Peña Nieto Solution: The National Gendarmerie

Responding to the apparent failure of the Merida Initiative to fundamentally weaken the drug threat gripping the country, Enrique Peña Nieto announced a "Pact for Mexico" on coming to power in December 2012.⁹ A central platform

CARTEL	CURRENT LEADER	MAJOR OPERATION AREAS
Sinaloa Federation	Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán; Ismael "El Mayo" Zambada	North and Western provinces; Baja Peninsula
Los Zetas	Miguel Ángel Treviño (aka "Z-40")	North and Eastern provinces; Gulf of Mexico
Arellano Felix Organization (Tijuana Cartel)	Luis Fernando Sánchez Arellano	Tijuana
Cartel Pacifico (Beltrán Leyva)	Héctor Beltrán-Leyva	Morelos
Carillo Fuentes Organization (Juárez Cartel)	Vicente Carrillo Fuentes (aka "Viceroy")	Ciudad Juárez
Los Caballeros Templarios (Knights Templar)	Sr. vando Gómez (aka "El Tuta"), Dioniso Loya (aka "El Tio")	Morelia
La Familia	Not Known	Michoacán, Mexico State
Gulf Cartel	Mario Armando Ramírez, El Pelón (ELX-20)	Matamoros, Tamaulipas
Cártel de Jalisco Nueva Generación (Jalisco New Generation)	Rubén Oseguera (aka "El Mencho")	Jalisco
Independent Cartel of Acapulco	Not Known	Acapulco

Figure 1. Major cartels and areas of operation.

of his proposed solution is to take the counternarcotics function out of the hands of the military—which he argues has not only been ineffective but counterproductive—and return it to a law enforcement structure that is "clean," transparent and trusted.¹⁰ To this end, the government has pledged to create an entirely new paramilitary unit that is equipped and authorized to reestablish security across the country.

The National Gendarmerie, which is modeled after counterparts in France and Spain, is due to become operational later this year. According to the Office of the Presidency, the "corps will be responsible for strengthening territorial control in rural municipalities with the greatest institutional weakness, as well as strategic installations such as ports, airports and borders."¹¹ The force will fall under the authority of the secretary of the interior and

targeting youths; legal modernization; overhauling the prison system; and police reform. See "Peña Nieto's Challenge: Criminal Cartels and Rule of Law in Mexico," p. 38.

10 Robert Gray, "U.S. Border Residents Mixed Over Mexico Pena Nieto's Win," Reuters, July 3, 2012; Randal Archibold and Damien Cave, "Mexico Election Signals New Tack in the Drug War," *New York Times*, June 11, 2012; Vulliamy and Tuckman.

11 Barnard Thompson, "The 'National Gendarmerie' and Mexico's Crime Fighting Plans," Mexidata.info, December 24, 2012.

initially be 10,000-strong, with 8,000 personnel drawn from the army (which, unlike the police, has largely not been afflicted by corruption) supplemented by 2,000 marines from the navy.¹² The plan is to expand this cadre to 40,000 during the next two years with all personnel assigned on long-term deployments.¹³ Although a civilian will have the responsibility for leading these personnel, the troops themselves will remain under military/naval command.

The National Gendarmerie will be divided into 14 regional commands that correspond to major drug trafficking zones in the country. Three bases will be established along the U.S.-Mexico border and are expected to be fully operational by the beginning of June 2013.¹⁴ Members will be thoroughly vetted, equipped with modern weaponry and body armor and will have access to an air lift capacity of at least 24 helicopters.¹⁵ According to the PRI, the force will be financed from fiscal and energy reforms, with initial expenditures estimated in the range of 1.5 billion pesos (\$117.4 million); exact dollar figures have yet to be made public.¹⁶

Apart from fighting the drug cartels, the National Gendarmerie will have information collection authority. To this end, it will work closely with the National Security and Investigation Center (CISEN)—Mexico's main intelligence agency—and other units mandated to investigate organized crime groups. Considerable emphasis will be placed on monitoring rural jurisdictions where the state has a limited presence.¹⁷

6 Personal interview, political risk consultant, Mexico City, April 2013. Also see Chalk, *The Latin American Drug Trade*, pp. 25-30; "Peña Nieto's Challenge: Criminal Cartels and Rule of Law in Mexico," pp. 7-13.

7 Cited in "Peña Nieto's Challenge: Criminal Cartels and Rule of Law in Mexico," p. 21.

8 Personal interview, political risk consultant, Mexico City, April 2013. For a historical overview of the extent of narcotics-related corruption in Mexico, see Laurie Freeman, "State of Siege: Drug-Related Violence and Corruption in Mexico," Washington Office on Latin America, 2006.

9 The Pact for Mexico highlights several components for reducing crime in the country: community programs

12 Personal interview, political risk consultant, Mexico City, April 2013; personal interview, U.S. Embassy official, Mexico City, April 2013.

13 Anahi Rama and Dave Graham, "Mexico's Pena Nieto Plans New Police Force to Fight Drugs," Reuters, April 9, 2012.

14 Thompson.

15 Personal interview, political risk consultant, Mexico City, April 2013; personal interview, U.S. Embassy official, Mexico City, April 2013. It has yet to be determined if all 24 helicopters will be procured from the United States or if some will be redistributed from the Federal Police's inventory.

16 "Peña Nieto's Challenge: Criminal Cartels and Rule of Law in Mexico," pp. 38-39; Thompson.

17 Thompson.

Assessment

Despite the optimism surrounding the National Gendarmerie, it is not apparent that the force represents a fundamental departure from Calderon's militarized counternarcotics approach. Although falling under the Ministry of the Interior, the National Gendarmerie will mostly consist of soldiers who will remain under military/naval command. These troops will be heavily armed, uniquely trained in rapid assault tactics (rather than more standard evidentiary procedures) and specifically authorized to operate above force levels that typically apply to the police. The unit will also be large; while not as extensive as the 96,000 personnel that were ultimately deployed by Calderon, it will be on par with force levels that were mobilized when Calderon first came to power (45,000 in 2007).¹⁸ As one commentator remarked, despite the rhetoric of a new approach, the gendarmerie may simply end up doing the same thing in the same places and with basically the same tactics, leadership and equipment as previous army units.¹⁹

The National Gendarmerie will also add another layer of complexity to what is already a highly convoluted law enforcement community in Mexico. A plethora of forces exist in the country, all of which answer to separate mandates, command structures and bureaucratic management systems. The gendarmerie may inject a new element of confusion to this Byzantine picture, especially given that it is meant to operate across all levels of governance—local, state and national. Particular problems are likely to arise with the Federal Police, not least in terms of how they will share resources (including helicopters), delineate jurisdictions and coordinate intelligence.²⁰ These problems have been encountered in the two countries on which the National Gendarmerie is modeled—France and Spain—both of which are now looking to merge their national forces.²¹

A further problem has to do with the rural focus of the National Gendarmerie. The force is primarily being readied to boost security and surveillance in remote areas where the state has a limited presence. This is at odds with the urbanized nature of Mexico where up to 80% of homicides and 95% of all crime occurs in the cities—not in the countryside.²²

Finally, the projected number of troops who are slated to fill the ranks of the National Gendarmerie is 40,000. While this represents only a fifth of Mexico's total armed forces (including doctors, nurses, administrative employees, custodial staff and engineers), it amounts to around a third of its operational personnel. This is a sizeable cut and could erode the military's ability to perform traditional functions of territorial defense as well as assistance missions in responding to major natural disasters.²³

There is certainly reason to believe that the militarized counternarcotics tack of Felipe Calderon did not work and that an alternative strategy is now required. The dividend resulting from President Nieto's proposed approach, however, could be marginal at best. Rather than creating a new national force, another option could have been to reform the command structure and oversight controls of the existing Federal Police and ensure that serving officers at the state and local levels are fully vetted, properly trained and above all adequately paid.²⁴

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22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.

24 Personal interview, political risk consultant, Mexico City, April 2013.

Morocco's Stability in the Wake of the Arab Spring

By Camille Tawil

IN THE AFTERMATH of the Arab Spring, many hoped that the authoritarian regimes in the North African states of Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Algeria and Morocco would be swept from power and new democratic governments would replace them. Yet the transition from the old authoritarian rule to a new democratic order has not been smooth. Tunisia, Egypt and Libya have all seen a sharp rise in political instability, security problems, social unrest, and above all a growing presence of Islamist militants. These developments occurred even though these governments held successful elections in the past two years that brought Islamist parties to power for the first time, mainly in coalition with other national or secular parties.

In Algeria and Morocco, the results have not followed this paradigm. In Algeria, political reforms are not yet complete,¹ and the country's Islamist party was crushed during parliamentary elections in May 2012. In Morocco, King Mohammed VI announced major political reforms, including a new constitution that eliminated many of the entitlements and privileges he previously enjoyed. During the subsequent elections in November 2011, the Islamists came to power, yet unlike developments in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya, the rise of the Islamists in Morocco did not bring turmoil.

Although it may still be premature to judge the outcome of Morocco's Arab Spring, there are a few clear lessons from the way that the country has conducted its transition into what is promised to be a more representative government that follows democratic principles. This article argues that the Moroccan "spring" provides a recipe for other countries in transition to follow, especially in terms of achieving a gradual change or reform without much bloodshed or instability. Morocco's smooth transition can be best explained by the monarchy's willingness to allow moderate Islamists to function as a

18 Personal interview, U.S. Embassy official, Mexico City, April 2013

19 Alejandro Hope, "Is It Worth Creating a Gendarmerie in Mexico?" *Insight Crime*, December 10, 2012.

20 Personal interview, U.S. Embassy official, Mexico City, April 2013

21 Hope.

1 The amended constitution is still being written.

legitimate political party. Morocco's Islamists, for their part, have also shown maturity by accepting a measured, step-by-step reform process, instead of calling for a total change of the regime, as was the case in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya.

Morocco's Version of the Arab Spring

Morocco avoided much of the Arab Spring violence because the Islamist Justice and Development Party (PJD) had been a recognized opposition party in the years before its rise to power in the November 2011 elections.² This is in stark contrast to the Islamist parties that came to power during the Arab Spring protests in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya. In Hosni Mubarak's Egypt, the

“With the Islamist party's success in Morocco, there is hope that Salafi-jihadis will lose appeal.”

Muslim Brotherhood was a banned organization. In Zine El Abidine Ben Ali's Tunisia, the Ennahda movement was proscribed and its leaders driven into exile. In Mu`ammar Qadhafi's Libya, the Muslim Brotherhood fared no better.³

Only in Algeria did a legal Islamist party exist, the Movement of Society for Peace (Hams). Hams was even represented in the government as a junior partner until it decided to join the opposition ahead of the legislative elections in May 2012. Hams, watching developments in neighboring countries, may have

thought that the Arab Spring would bring it to power in Algeria. Instead, Hams and a coalition of other Islamists were soundly defeated, according to the official election results.⁴ Hams' election loss may have to do with the fact that it previously collaborated with the Algerian government. The opposition, therefore, may not have considered Hams capable of bringing real “change” to society since the party worked with the government for so many years. Even though Hams eventually joined the opposition, voters may have perceived that as an opportunist decision—only joining the opposition once they thought that the Arab Spring in general favored the Islamist party in elections.⁵ The opposite was true in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia, where the Islamists were persecuted by the old regimes; when the Arab Spring swept these governments from power, the Islamist parties were the main beneficiaries.⁶

In Morocco, however, the old government has remained in power, and the Islamists have succeeded as well. The PJD in Morocco, while always recognized as an opposition party, did not play a role in previous Moroccan governments, which may be why it was so successful in elections. Voters did not view the party as “corrupt” or as “collaborators” with the regime. Another factor that may have played to the advantage of the PJD relates to the way it responded to protestors' demands in 2011. The PJD pursued a measured approach with how it pushed the king for reforms; it did not cause

instability or invite a harsh response from the regime. In Tunisia and Egypt, in contrast, protestors demanded a total regime change.⁷ In Libya, the demands were the same, and eventually the protests evolved into a full-fledged war. Yet in Morocco, the PJD showed a

“Yet in Morocco, the PJD showed a willingness to meet the king half-way by accepting his concessions despite some protestors' demands for total regime change.”

willingness to meet the king half-way by accepting his concessions despite some protestors' demands for total regime change. It is not clear how much power the king was initially willing to concede, but the king and his advisers may have realized that their reforms had to be deep if they wanted to avoid developments in neighboring Egypt and Tunisia, where both governments were completely toppled.⁸

In addition to having a moderate Islamist party in the officially recognized opposition, the king's other advantage was that the country's more extreme Islamist group—the banned Justice and Charity movement—refused to use violence against the regime despite its strict position on the “illegality” of the monarch as the “leader of the faithful,” as well as its

2 The PJD was established in its current form in 1998, although its roots date back further. Its founder, Abdelkarim al-Khatib, was a prominent nationalist figure and a physician of King Mohammed V, grandfather of the current king. More information on this party can be found on its official website at www.pjd.ma.

3 The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt entered parliament during Mubarak's rule, but this happened when its members won seats as independents, not as candidates of a political party. In Tunisia, Ennahda was prevented from operating in the country as a political party and its members were driven into exile (or into prison) in the early 1990s. In Libya, the Muslim Brotherhood was almost totally dismantled by Qadhafi's security services in the late 1990s after the group was discovered to have clandestine cells within the country.

4 The name of the coalition was the Green Alliance. The Green Alliance included the Movement of Society for Peace, Ennahda and the Movement for National Reform (Islah).

5 There may have also been an unspoken reason why voters rejected the Islamists in the elections: the Algerian people paid a heavy price during the Islamist insurgency in the 1990s and some were fearful that voting the Islamists into power might lead the country into bloodshed once more. Therefore, they may have voted for the ruling party, the National Liberation Front, to ensure stability.

6 The Islamist successes in Tunisia's and Egypt's elections may have also been helped by the fact that the old ruling parties, the Constitutional Democratic Rally (RCD) and the National Democratic Party, respectively, were banned after the revolutions, and thus the Islamists did not face an established opposition. In Libya, no loyalists of the old regime contested the elections, and in any case Qadhafi had not allowed any parties to operate in Libya during his 42-year rule.

7 The revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt only lasted a few weeks, and their pace seemed to take the Islamist parties, Ennahda and the Muslim Brotherhood, by surprise. The protestors, who included Islamists, demanded a total “change” of the regime (the removal of Ben Ali and Mubarak), although it is not clear if this demand was made because of instructions from parties such as Ennahda and the Brotherhood. Whatever the case, the Islamist parties did not try to push for a compromise that included accepting a gradual reform from the old regimes of Ben Ali and Mubarak.

8 Additionally, both governments were toppled despite Mubarak leading a strong military regime and Ben Ali leading a regime that was successful in both security and economic affairs. See personal interview, member of the commission that was asked by the palace to write Morocco's new constitution in the spring of 2011, Rabat, Morocco, February 2013.

opposition to the monarchy as a system of government. The movement engaged in demonstrations as part of the 20th February youth movement, but it refused to adopt violence—contrary to what occurred in Tunisia and Egypt, and then later Libya.⁹

The Justice and Charity movement was unhappy with the scope of reforms included in the new constitution, but its call for a boycott of the referendum to approve the amendments was not heeded by Moroccans; instead, they voted overwhelmingly to approve it.¹⁰ That

“This outlet could prevent al-Qa`ida and other Salafi-jihadi groups from recruiting a section of Moroccan society who may have become jihadists if not for their participation in the political process.”

setback was the start of the break-up of the 20th February movement; the Justice and Charity faction withdrew from the coalition, depriving the movement from the thousands of Islamists who made the bulk of the protestors calling for regime change. Today, the Justice and Charity movement seems to be contemplating applying to become a legally recognized political party. This would allow it to push for its objectives through the ballot box instead of through street protests, as has been the case for decades.¹¹

9 The Moroccan security forces also calmed the situation by not using extreme violence against the protesters. Had they resorted to such tactics, developments may have escalated, as happened in Tunisia and Egypt.

10 The new constitution was approved by a majority of 98% of votes, and the participation rate was 70%, according to the official results.

11 Fathallah Arsalane, the Justice and Charity movement's deputy leader, recently said in an interview that his group was ready to enter the political fray if the authorities allowed it. See “Banned Morocco Islamist Group ‘Ready to Form Party,’” *Agence France-Presse*, January 7, 2013.

Despite Morocco's smooth transition, there still remains significant debate about the extent of the reforms in the country.¹² Some criticize the reforms on the grounds that the king has retained too much power, especially in the military and religious sectors. Others argue that the reforms have been sufficient, especially considering how much power the king previously enjoyed. Regardless of whether the reforms went far enough to transform Morocco into a “true democracy,” the PJD remains content with the political changes, and it favors a gradual, step-by-step reform process.¹³ Indeed, the PJD's moderate approach was rewarded in the elections of November 2011: it became the lead party in the new parliament, with 107 seats, up from the 46 seats it had in the last parliament. This result allowed the PJD to form a new government in coalition with other parties, including the nationalist Istiqlal Party, which was second with 60 seats.¹⁴

Nevertheless, the PJD still faces significant obstacles. Morocco suffers from a rapidly growing population, limited natural resources, high unemployment especially among young university graduates, as well as geopolitical challenges, such as the Western Sahara dispute that almost caused a crisis of relations recently

12 “The King's Reforms Not Enough, Opponents,” BBC, June 18, 2011.

13 The PJD, along with other groups, organized a large rally in Casablanca on May 1, 2011, in support of the reforms announced by the king in his speech of March 9. When the constitution was rewritten and the king announced a referendum to vote on it, the PJD called for a “Yes” vote. Mustapha Ramid, a top leader of the PJD, explained: “I say with all confidence that the planned constitution has clearly and to a great extent met a large part of our demands regarding reforms...therefore we decided to vote ‘yes’ for the constitution, although there are still many remarks about the chapters.” This statement is available at the PJD's website: www.pjd.ma/news-pjd/actualite-742.

14 The Istiqlal is a nationalist-conservative political party that led the struggle for Morocco's independence. While a coalition between the PJD and the Istiqlal Party can be understood from an ideological point of view, what is strange about the current coalition government is the fact that it includes the Party of Progress and Socialism (the former communists). The Moroccan government, however, is currently facing a major crisis, with the new leadership of the Istiqlal Party threatening to walk out of the coalition over some political differences with the prime minister, Abdelilah Benkirane.

between Morocco and its traditional ally, the United States.¹⁵

It is still too early to judge whether the PJD's handling of Morocco's challenges has affected the party's popularity. The only tangible indication has been the results of the partial elections that occurred in five districts to elect new members of parliament in March 2013. The PJD and its partners in the coalition government won every contested seat.¹⁶ If that is an indication, then the popularity of the PJD-led government seems to be intact among Moroccan voters.

Will Islamists in Power Weaken the Appeal of Salafi-Jihadism?

With the Islamist party's success in Morocco, there is hope that Salafi-jihadis will lose appeal. Although Morocco has not suffered an Islamist insurgency in the past—in contrast to Egypt, Libya and Algeria in the 1990s—there have been a few terrorist attacks in the country. In 1994, there was an attack against the Atlas Asni Hotel in Marrakesh.¹⁷ In 2003, a series of suicide attacks rocked Casablanca, resulting in 45 deaths, including 12 suicide bombers.¹⁸ In 2011, an attack in Marrakesh killed 17 people, most of whom were tourists.¹⁹

All of these attacks were blamed on cells of Islamist militants, some of whom were influenced by al-Qa`ida. In the case of the Casablanca bombings in 2003, Moroccan authorities charged

15 The United States circulated a proposed Security Council resolution that backed widening the remit of the UN peace mission in the Sahara, MINURSO, to oversee the state of human rights in the region. This pleased the Polisario Front. The Polisario Front calls for a referendum on the independence of their territory, which has been administered by Morocco since the 1970s. Morocco, which considers the Sahara part of its historical territories, offered the Sahrawis self-governance under its sovereignty. The United States had to drop its proposal after strong protests from Morocco and some of its allies last month.

16 For the results of this partial vote, see Jamal Saidi, “Morocco: Coalition Government Wins Partial Elections,” *Morocco World News*, March 2, 2013.

17 Roger Cohen, “Islam Radicals Are Sentenced in France,” *New York Times*, January 11, 1997.

18 “Terror Blasts Rock Casablanca,” BBC, May 17, 2003.

19 Angelique Chrisafis, “Moroccan Tourist Cafe Terrorist Attack Leaves at Least 15 Dead,” *Guardian*, April 28, 2011.

a group of Salafi-jihadi clerics with influencing the suicide bombers.²⁰ Authorities arrested a number of these clerics and sentenced them to lengthy prison terms. All of them maintained their innocence throughout. After the PJD came to power in 2011, the clerics were freed from prison.²¹ Although this approach has risks, the PJD hopes that these clerics will now participate in the political process and therefore provide an outlet for would-be jihadists to engage in the political system. Some of the released Salafi-jihadi clerics, for example, have said that they may be willing to work within the political system and may even contest elections.²² Former jihadists in countries such as Egypt and Libya have taken a similar approach, although with disappointing election results.²³ This outlet could prevent al-Qa`ida and other Salafi-jihadi groups from recruiting a section of Moroccan society who may have become jihadists if not for their participation in the political process.

Nevertheless, the threat from jihadist violence in Morocco remains. In the past few months, authorities have discovered and dismantled a number of jihadist cells in the country, reviving the memories of 2003.²⁴ The cells were trying to

recruit people to train in northern Mali with al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM).²⁵ These arrests reveal that jihadists are still operating in Morocco and continuing to train despite the fact that the Islamist PJD is now in power. It is not clear whether these militants have plans to execute attacks against targets in Morocco. There is concern, however, that the French-led intervention in northern Mali has made that location inaccessible to Moroccan jihadists, which might cause them to look for new targets or training locations.

These developments could lead to a similar situation as seen in Tunisia today, where despite the fact that the country is ruled by an Islamist-led government, Salafi-jihadis are openly recruiting young militants and sending them to training camps in the mountains, especially along Algeria's borders.²⁶ If the jihadists in Morocco choose to confront the government, however, it will be difficult for them to achieve much popular support, especially in light of the fact that the party in power is Islamist and was elected by the people in free and fair elections. In fact, such a plan could backfire.

Camille Tawil is the author of Brothers In Arms: The Story of al-Qaeda and the Arab Jihadists.

20 Four of the best-known Salafi-jihadi clerics in Morocco were arrested and tried in connection with the Casablanca bombings. Mohammed al-Fizizi, Abdul-Wahab Rafiki (Abu Hafis) and Omar al-Haddouchi were sentenced to 30 years in prison, while Hasan al-Kettani was given a 20-year sentence. They all denied any role in the bombings.

21 Al-Kettani, Abu Hafis and al-Haddouchi were all freed by a royal pardon.

22 After his release from prison, Mohammed al-Fizizi, for example, said that he was working on the final preparations before announcing a religious education association that will transform into "a political party with a religious bent." He is even quoted as saying that he chose the name for his party as "Learning and Work" (Ilm and Amal).

23 In Egypt, the Islamic Group (al-Gama`a al-Islamiyya) contested the 2011-2012 elections through a political party, the Building and Development Party, which gained 13 seats in the lower house of parliament. In Libya, the former jihadists of the Libyan Islamic Fighting group (LIFG) also contested the elections of the General National Congress in July 2012, but their political parties, such as al-Watan and al-Umma al-Wasat, failed miserably in winning almost any of the seats they contested.

24 The Interior Ministry announced on May 9, 2013, that two extremist cells that were dismantled in November 2012 were planning to set up training camps and to carry

out "jihad attacks" in Morocco. See "Moroccan Authorities Dismantled Cells Plotted To Carry Out Jihadist Attacks In Morocco," Maghreb Arab Press, May 9, 2013.

25 "Busted Islamist Cells 'Planned Attacks' in Morocco," al-Arabiya, May 9, 2013.

26 In December 2012, the Tunisian Interior Ministry announced that it had arrested 16 men suspected of belonging to a group with ties to al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb, in the western regions of Kasserine and Jendouba near the Algerian border. See "16 Qaeda Suspects Arrested in Tunisia: Minister," Agence France-Presse, December 21, 2012.

Recent Highlights in Terrorist Activity

April 1, 2013 (IRAQ): A suicide bomber in an explosive-laden truck attacked a police station in Tikrit, Salah al-Din Province, killing at least seven people. – RFE/RL, April 1

April 1, 2013 (IRAQ): Militants attacked the Korea Gas Company at the Akkas gas field in Anbar Province, killing at least three local workers and kidnapping two others. They then set the company's camp on fire. The facility is located near the border with Syria. According to Reuters, "No group claimed responsibility for the late-night assault, but security officials say the local wing of al Qaeda, the Islamic State of Iraq, is regaining ground in the remote hills, caves and villages along the Syrian border." – Reuters, April 1

April 2, 2013 (PAKISTAN): Dozens of militants attacked a major power station in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, shutting down electricity to half of Peshawar. The militants, who traveled to the facility from Darra Adam Khel, destroyed the entire grid station. According to a police official, "They entered the grid station and started setting ablaze each and every thing. They kidnapped nine people and killed five of them later and threw their bodies in the fields." The militants killed a total of seven people. – Reuters, April 2

April 3, 2013 (AFGHANISTAN): Nine Afghan Taliban militants forced their way into an Afghan court in an attempt to free insurgents standing trial in Farah Province. The assault began with a car bomb at the entrance to the court. For the next seven hours, the militants battled security forces. All nine militants as well as 34 civilians, six army troops and four policemen were killed in the battle. – AFP, April 3

April 3, 2013 (PAKISTAN): Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) militants killed four Pakistani security personnel in Karachi, Sindh Province. The TTP, which claimed responsibility for the attack, fired on a van carrying paramilitary troops in Karachi's Korangi neighborhood. Karachi, Pakistan's largest city, is not within the TTP's normal area of militant operations,

although it has increasingly engaged in brazen operations in the city in the past year. – *Dawn, April 3*

April 5, 2013 (PAKISTAN): Pakistani security forces killed an alleged Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) commander, Naimatullah Mehsud, in the Sohrab Goth area of Karachi, Sindh Province. – *Dawn, April 6*

April 5, 2013 (THAILAND): A bomb killed two top provincial officials in southern Thailand's Yala Province. Deputy Governor of Yala Province Issara Thongthawat and Yala's permanent secretary responsible for security, Chavalit Krairisk, were both killed. – *Straits Times, April 5*

April 6, 2013 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber in a vehicle attacked a U.S. convoy near Qalat in Zabul Province, killing three U.S. soldiers, two U.S. civilians and three Afghans. The U.S. civilians worked for the State Department and the Defense Department. The Afghan Taliban claimed responsibility. Later reports, however, suggested that the five U.S. personnel were instead killed while on foot just outside the gate of the U.S. base in Qalat and not traveling in a vehicle convoy as originally reported. – *New York Times, April 6; Guardian, April 11*

April 6, 2013 (IRAQ): A suicide bomber killed 22 people in an election campaign tent for Sunni candidate Muthanna al-Jorani in Ba`quba, Diyala Province. Al-Jorani, however, escaped unharmed. – *Reuters, April 6*

April 7, 2013 (GLOBAL): Al-Qa`ida chief Ayman al-Zawahiri released a new audio statement, urging Muslims in Arab Spring countries to unite and establish an Islamic state. He told Syrian rebels to establish a "jihadist Islamic state," saying that such a state would help to reestablish the caliphate. Al-Zawahiri also said that France would face "the same fate America met in Iraq and Afghanistan" in its military intervention in Mali. – *RT, April 7; AFP, April 7*

April 8, 2013 (SYRIA): A suicide bomber detonated a massive car bomb in a busy residential and financial district in Damascus, killing at least 15 people. – *Dawn, April 8; AFP, April 8*

April 9, 2013 (SYRIA/IRAQ): The Islamic State of Iraq (ISI), an al-Qa`ida front group, announced that it was merging with Syria's Jabhat al-Nusra, the Syrian Salafi-jihadi rebel group that is at the forefront of the insurgency against the Bashar al-Assad regime. ISI chief Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi purportedly said that the ISI and Jabhat al-Nusra would now be known together as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. "It's now time to declare in front of the people of the Levant and (the) world that the al-Nusra Front [Jabhat al-Nusra] is but an extension of the Islamic State of Iraq and part of it," al-Baghdadi said. On April 10, however, Jabhat al-Nusra declared allegiance to al-Qa`ida leader Ayman al-Zawahiri, but denied that they were merging with the ISI. – *Reuters, April 9; Reuters, April 10*

April 10, 2013 (SYRIA): Syria's Jabhat al-Nusra, a Salafi-jihadi rebel group, pledged allegiance to al-Qa`ida chief Ayman al-Zawahiri. The group denied, however, that they had merged with the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI). Muhammad al-Jawlani, Jabhat al-Nusra's leader, said that his group was not consulted before the April 9 announcement from ISI chief Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi that the two groups had merged. Al-Jawlani said that while his group has received assistance from the ISI, they will continue to operate under their own name with loyalty to al-Zawahiri. Al-Jawlani said, "The banner of the [al-Nusra] Front will remain the same, nothing will change about it even though we are proud of the banner of the (Islamic) State and of those who carry it." – *Reuters, April 10*

April 10, 2013 (YEMEN): Said al-Shihri, the second-in-command of al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), purportedly released a new audio statement, criticizing Saudi Arabia's policy of allowing the U.S. military to launch drone aircraft from Saudi territory. "They [Saudi Arabia] made it permissible with their bases and forces that planes launch to kill people of faith in Yemen," al-Shihri said. "Instead of spending money to fight poverty and unemployment, and help Muslims defend themselves against enemies, it is spent to fight Muslims in every place." On January 24, 2013, the Yemeni government announced that al-Shihri died of wounds sustained during

a U.S. drone attack in November 2012. Al-Shihri's latest statement, if verified, contradicts those prior claims. – *Angola Press, April 11; AP, January 23*

April 11, 2013 (TURKEY): Turkish police announced that al-Qa`ida planned to bomb the U.S. Embassy in Ankara, as well as a synagogue and other targets. Turkish authorities, however, foiled the plot after they dismantled two al-Qa`ida cells in February 2013. Turkish authorities arrested 12 people—two Chechens, two Azeris and eight Turks—as part of the operation. – *UPI, April 12*

April 11, 2013 (NIGERIA): Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau rejected the possibility of accepting any potential amnesty offered by the Nigerian government. According to Shekau, Boko Haram has not done anything wrong that would require an amnesty; instead, Shekau said, Boko Haram should be the one to offer the Nigerian government a pardon. – *Voice of America, April 11*

April 12, 2013 (AFGHANISTAN): Some 200 Taliban militants overran a remote Afghan Army outpost in eastern Afghanistan's Kunar Province, killing all 13 soldiers assigned to the facility. The soldiers at the outpost were from the Afghan Army's Third Battalion of the Second Brigade, one of only a handful of Afghan Army battalions designated by the U.S. military as able to operate independently and without foreign advisers. – *New York Times, April 12*

April 12, 2013 (MALI): A suicide bomber killed three Chadian soldiers at a market in Kidal. – *Reuters, April 12*

April 14, 2013 (PAKISTAN): Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) militants assassinated Mukarram Shah, a local leader of the anti-Taliban Awami National Party (ANP), in Swat. The TTP claimed responsibility, saying, "We have already announced we will attack ANP and other secular parties." – *Express Tribune, April 14*

April 14, 2013 (SOMALIA): Nine al-Shabab suicide bombers attacked Mogadishu's Supreme Court complex, in an attack that left at least five people dead. Six of the militants detonated suicide vests, while the other three were shot to death. The attack has been described as the most serious in

Mogadishu since al-Shabab was forced out of the city in August 2011. – *AP, April 14; Guardian, April 14; New York Times, April 14*

April 14, 2013 (MALI): Chad's president announced that he will withdraw Chadian troops from Mali because the "Chadian army does not have the skills to fight a shadowy, guerrilla-style war that is taking place in northern Mali... Our soldiers will return to Chad. They have accomplished their mission." His decision came just two days after a suicide bomber killed three Chadian troops in Kidal. – *Reuters, April 14*

April 15, 2013 (UNITED STATES): Two explosions tore through the Boston Marathon, killing three people and injuring more than 200. One of the two suspects, Tamerlan Tsarnaev, was killed in a firefight with police in the Boston suburb of Watertown on April 19, while authorities arrested the second suspect, Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, that night in the same suburb. The two suspects were brothers. Before his capture, Dzhokhar Tsarnaev reportedly wrote a note in which he claimed responsibility for the terrorist attack, saying it was retribution for U.S. military campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq. "When you attack one Muslim, you attack all Muslims," Dzhokhar Tsarnaev reportedly wrote. Tamerlan Tsarnaev was 26-years-old, while Dzhokhar Tsarnaev is 19-years-old. – *Washington Post, April 23; Fox News, May 16*

April 15, 2013 (UNITED STATES): A U.S. federal court sentenced two New Jersey men to prison for conspiring to join al-Shabab to wage a holy war against non-Muslims. Mohamed Alessa was sentenced to 22 years in prison, while Carlos Almonte received a 20-year prison sentence. Authorities arrested the two men at New York's John F. Kennedy airport in June 2010 as they tried to board flights to Egypt. – *Reuters, April 15*

April 15, 2013 (IRAQ): A wave of attacks tore through Iraq only days before provincial elections. Car bombs that exploded at a Baghdad airport checkpoint killed two people, while four bombs targeting police patrols killed five people in Tuz Khurmat, Salah al-Din Province. In total, at least 20 people were killed in the wave of attacks. – *NBC, April 15*

April 15, 2013 (PHILIPPINES): Philippine troops reportedly slightly wounded Isnlon Hapilon, a senior leader in the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), in the southern Philippines. Hapilon's followers dragged him to safety after soldiers attacked their jungle base in Basilan, killing eight militants. The United States has a \$5 million bounty on Hapilon's head. – *New York Times, April 16; GMA News, April 16*

April 16, 2013 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber attacked a political rally held for the secular Awami National Party (ANP) in Peshawar, killing 16 people. Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan claimed responsibility. – *Dawn, April 16; RFE/RL, April 17*

April 17, 2013 (AFGHANISTAN): Afghan authorities discovered the bodies of four Afghan soldiers with their throats slit in Jawzjan Province. The four soldiers had been kidnapped by the Taliban the day prior. – *AFP, April 17*

April 17, 2013 (PAKISTAN): A U.S. drone destroyed a Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan training camp in South Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, killing at least five militants. – *AFP, April 17*

April 17, 2013 (YEMEN): A U.S. drone killed four suspected militants from al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula in a desert area 90 miles south of Sana`a. – *AP, April 18*

April 17, 2013 (YEMEN): A U.S. drone blew up the house of Hamed Radman, an influential member of al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula. Radman was killed in the blast. – *AP, April 18*

April 18, 2013 (UNITED KINGDOM): Authorities jailed four Britons for plotting al-Qa`ida-inspired bombings across the United Kingdom. The men—Zahid Iqbal, Mohammed Sharfaraz Ahmed, Umar Arshad and Syed Farhan Hussain—are all from Luton, north of London. As part of the plot, the men wanted to pack a remote-controlled toy car with explosives, and drive it under the gates of a British military base. – *Reuters, April 18*

April 18, 2013 (IRAQ): A suicide bomber detonated explosives at a Baghdad café, killing at least 22 people. The bombing

occurred just days ahead of provincial elections. – *Belfast Telegraph, April 18; AP, April 18*

April 18, 2013 (UNITED ARAB EMIRATES): Authorities announced that they recently arrested seven members of an alleged al-Qa`ida cell in the country. The suspected militants were reportedly planning to attack targets in the United Arab Emirates. The men were also supplying al-Qa`ida "with money and providing logistical support and seeking to expand its activities to some [other] countries in the region." – *BBC, April 18*

April 19, 2013 (UNITED STATES): Authorities arrested Abdella Ahmad Tounisi, a suburban Chicago teenager from Aurora, on terrorism-related charges as he attempted to board a flight at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport to Turkey. The Federal Bureau of Investigation alleges that Tounisi, a U.S. citizen, was trying to join the al-Qa`ida-linked Jabhat al-Nusra, a Salafi-jihadi rebel group in Syria. – *Fox News, April 21*

April 19, 2013 (NIGERIA): Boko Haram group militants released the French family that it had kidnapped in northern Cameroon two months earlier. The family had been held in Nigeria. A Nigerian government report later suggested that Boko Haram received more than \$3 million in ransom to release the hostages. The report did not specify who paid the ransom. – *Guardian, April 19; BBC, April 26*

April 20, 2013 (PAKISTAN): A female suicide bomber detonated explosives outside a hospital in Bajaur Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, killing at least four people. – *AFP, April 20*

April 21, 2013 (AFGHANISTAN): A civilian transport helicopter made an emergency landing due to strong winds and heavy rain in a Taliban-controlled area of Logar Province. Taliban fighters captured everyone aboard the helicopter—possibly 11 people—and moved them to a more secure location. Those kidnapped include eight Turkish construction workers, two Russian pilots and an Afghan. – *AP, April 22; BBC, April 23*

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The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and not of the U.S. Military Academy, the Department of the Army, or any other agency of the U.S. Government.

April 21, 2013 (PAKISTAN): A roadside bomb targeted a Pakistani security convoy in Bannu District of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, killing four security officials. – *Express Tribune*, April 21

April 21, 2013 (YEMEN): A suspected U.S. drone killed two suspected militants from al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) in Marib Province. Hours later, AQAP fighters attacked a military checkpoint in the same area as the drone strike, killing two Yemeni soldiers. – *AP*, April 21

April 22, 2013 (CANADA): Canadian authorities arrested two foreign men in Montreal and Toronto, charging them with plotting a terrorist attack on a passenger train with support from al-Qa`ida elements based in Iran. The men, Chiheb Esseghaier and Raed Jaser, allegedly plotted to derail a passenger train in the greater Toronto area. A Canadian official said that the attack was “definitely in the planning stage but not imminent.” – *BBC*, April 23

April 23, 2013 (UNITED STATES): A U.S. court resentence Wadih el-Hage to life in prison for conspiring with Usama bin Ladin to kill Americans. El-Hage, Bin Ladin’s former secretary, is a naturalized U.S. citizen. – *Bloomberg*, April 23

April 23, 2013 (SPAIN): Spanish police arrested two suspected terrorists with links to al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). The suspects were originally from Algeria and Morocco, and they apparently radicalized by going to online forums and chat rooms. Authorities said that one of the suspects was identified and recruited by Mali-based AQIM members and given specific instructions for a trip to a jihadist camp in northern Mali. – *CNN*, April 24

April 23, 2013 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber in a vehicle killed at least four people near a Frontier Corps checkpoint in Quetta. Authorities suspect that the bomber was trying to reach a Shi`a-dominated neighborhood. The sectarian militant group Lashkar-i-Jhangvi claimed responsibility. – *AFP*, April 23; *AP*, April 24

April 26, 2013 (UNITED KINGDOM): A British court gave a life sentence to Irfan Naseer for his role as a ringleader of a Birmingham jihadist cell that plotted to explode up to eight rucksack bombs in suicide bombings in the United Kingdom. Naseer will have to serve a minimum of 18 years before he is considered for release. Ten other members of the cell also received prison sentences. Some of the men received training at militant camps in Pakistan, where they learned how to make bombs and mix poisons. The plot reportedly had the blessing of al-Qa`ida. – *Sky News*, April 26; *Reuters*, April 26; *AFP*, April 26

April 26, 2013 (AFGHANISTAN): The Afghan Taliban declared the start of their annual “spring offensive” against the Afghan government and international troops. – *AFP*, April 26

April 28, 2013 (PAKISTAN): Two separate bombs exploded at the campaign offices for secular candidates in Pakistan’s upcoming May 11 elections. The first bomb, in Kohat city, killed six people. The second bomb, in the suburbs of Peshawar, killed three people. Both candidates were not in their offices at the time of the attacks. Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan claimed responsibility. – *AP*, April 28

April 29, 2013 (SYRIA): A car bomb targeted the convoy of Syrian Prime Minister Wael al-Halqi in Damascus, but the prime minister survived the assassination attempt. – *BBC*, April 29

April 29, 2013 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber on a motorcycle targeted a police patrol car on the busy University Road in Peshawar, killing nine people. – *New York Times*, April 29

April 30, 2013 (SYRIA): A bomb exploded in the government-held area of Damascus, killing 13 people. – *Reuters*, April 30